AFRICA RECOVERY

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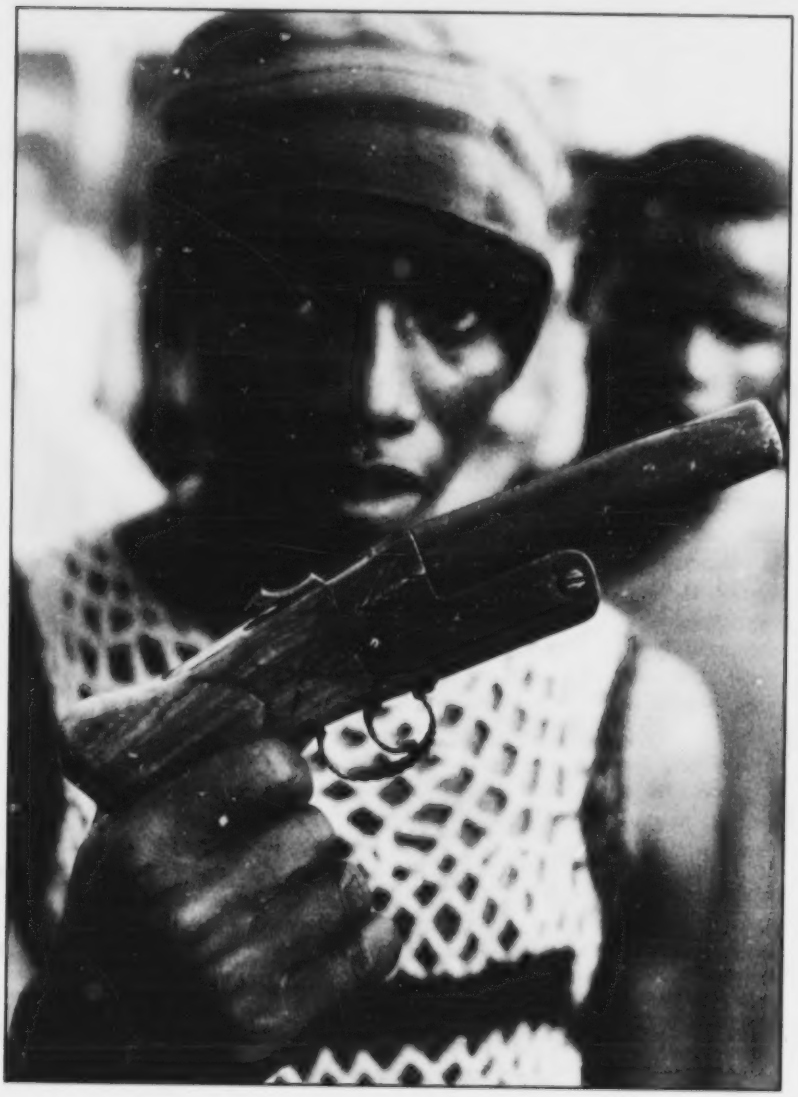

Impact Visuals / Tsur Vieler

Small arms in Africa

Counting the cost of gun violence

By Michael Fleshman

The dry rolling plains of northern Kenya seem an unlikely place for an arms race. But in less than a generation the pastoral Pokot people and their neighbours have gone from protecting their herds with spears to outfitting their young men with cheap, reliable and deadly automatic rifles from the war zones of Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan. The impact of modern military weapons on the Pokot and surrounding communities was brought tragically home in early 2001, when Pokot youth opened fire on a rival settlement, killing 47 people, burning down the village and transforming the almost-ceremonial tradition of cattle raiding into an occasion for human slaughter. "Guns are changing things," one young Pokot man told the *Washington Post* newspaper. "The young ones, they don't respect elders." "If you don't have a weapon," added another, "your grave is open."

In fact, small arms, which include rifles, pistols and light machine guns, are filling African graves in ever-increasing numbers — from the killing fields of Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the streets of Lagos and

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Also inside

WTO trade talks: what Doha means for Africa

Africa made some notable gains in the shifting economic and political sands of the 9-14 November World Trade Organization meeting in Doha, Qatar. But developing countries also reluctantly gave ground to Northern demands for talks aimed at opening up whole new areas of the global economy to liberalization. WTO head Mike Moore termed Doha a success, but at what cost, and to whom?

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Small arms in Africa

UNICEF / Steve Evans

In Sudan, adolescent boys walk away from the weapons they once carried as child soldiers.

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What Doha means for Africa

Compromises at WTO trade talks bring some gains, but at an uncertain cost

By **Gumisai Mutume**

Against a backdrop of war and global recession, trade ministers at the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Doha, Qatar, concluded what Director-General Mike Moore termed an "extraordinarily successful" conference. They agreed to a new round of negotiations aimed at opening vast new areas of the global economy to international competition. But the 9-14 November meeting also exposed the same kind of bitter divisions — among the major trading powers and between the industrial North and the developing South — that led to the failure of the last WTO ministerial meeting in Seattle in 1999 (see *Africa Recovery*, December 1999).

In addition to continuing talks over liberalization of trade in services and in agricultural products, the organization's member states will begin negotiations on industrial tariffs and trade-related aspects of environmental protection, among other issues. Developing countries had initially opposed inclusion of a number of even more controversial issues, but relented when they won agreement that those talks would be postponed until 2003 — and then only on the basis of an "explicit consensus" that eluded the ministers in Doha. In addition, upcoming talks will review past trade agreements for inequities that African and other developing countries argue have unfairly denied them the benefits of increased global commerce.

For proponents of greater trade liberalization, the stakes in Doha seemed considerable. A second failure like the one in Seattle, combined with a deepening global recession, they felt, could have spelled a return to widespread protectionism, thereby worsening the world crisis. The costs of failure, said Mr. Moore, "would have been very high."

However, with Africa's share of world trade dropping and its people sliding deeper into poverty, the continent's trade ministers might well have left Doha wondering about the costs of success, and who would pay for them.

Africa's expectations

The Africa Group of negotiators went to Doha opposed to adding new issues to the trade agenda until a better deal is reached on those already covered. With the notable exception of South Africa, which announced beforehand that it would support the launch of a broad new round of negotiations, most African countries wanted Doha to concentrate on resolving outstanding "implementation issues," such as the failure of Northern governments to reduce tariff barriers to African exports. The WTO General Council had, in fact, decided in December 2000 that the differences over these previous agreements, known as the Uruguay Round, should be resolved before or at Doha. Despite a commitment under Uruguay to reduce import duties, some developing country products exported to industrial nations, such as sugar, metals, cereals and textiles, continue to face tariff barriers, in some cases of more than 100 per cent.

"These are the countries that evangelize in the name of free trade," President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda told the UN General Assembly in New York in November, at the same time as the Doha meeting. "What a paradox," he said. "These double standards must end."

African ministers also went to Doha hoping to obtain binding commitments from rich countries to reduce the agricultural subsidies that enable the North to export cheap food to developing countries, to the detriment of farmers in the South. As well, they wanted binding commitments on food aid, grants and technical assistance from the industrialized countries, as compensation for the negative impact of removing agricultural import barriers. Finally, they sought an explicit affirmation that safeguards on intellectual property rights could be overridden for public health purposes, without fear of triggering trade sanctions or legal challenges

After years of trade talks, many African exports still face high tariffs in Northern markets.

Broad compromise, complex agenda

In the end, Doha resulted in a broad compromise between the rich and poor countries. The industrialized countries got a mention of the contentious new issues they wanted, but in the face of developing country resistance, agreed to postpone any decision to actually begin negotiations until the next WTO ministerial meeting in 2003. While the developing countries' emphasis on "implementation issues" — such as access for their agricultural and textile goods to industrialized country markets — was not actually resolved in Doha, they did win agreement that a review of past accords be incorporated into the new round.

This new round of negotiations is quite complex (see box, next page). Some talks will begin in early 2002, including on opening market access for "non-agricultural" (industrial) products and on revising laws against "dumping," by which subsidized goods are sold abroad below their true costs of production.

The controversial new issues include proposals on investment, competition policy, transparency in government procurement and trade facilitation, all of which could further open domestic markets to competition from foreign companies. In general, opponents claim, liberalization in these areas will reduce governments' ability to protect their countries' national interests. It is unclear whether or when talks

on these items will begin. Based on the vague language drafted in Doha, opponents such as India believe that WTO members can still vote to block the talks at the 2003 ministerial meeting. However, the European Union (EU) maintains there is a commitment to actually launch negotiations in 2003, with the next ministerial session merely deciding the nature of the talks.

While the separate areas of negotiation could be completed at different times, most agreements, including the implementation issues, are to be signed at the completion of the entire round and will become effective only after that date.

New agenda for trade talks

The WTO meeting in Doha agreed to a broad agenda of negotiations for 2002-05. The areas to be discussed include:

The "built-in" agenda: Negotiations in Geneva on the Agreement on Agriculture and the General Agreement on Trade in Services, which began in 2000, will now be incorporated into the new round. In agriculture, members will negotiate improvement in market access, reductions of subsidies and domestic support measures. The new round will also include negotiations on TRIPS.

Implementation issues: Re-negotiation on a series of issues, including commitments at the Uruguay Round that industrial countries have not met. They also involve developing countries' concerns about the economic impact of existing agreements, as well as the burdens and costs to poor countries of trying to implement some of them.

Industrial tariffs: Immediate negotiations on eliminating tariffs and other barriers to trade in manufactured goods, despite opposition from developing countries. A number of African countries asked for full impact assessments before negotiations start, since their experience so far has been that tariff reductions have contributed to industrial closures and job losses.

Environment: The EU pushed for negotiations in this area, although developing countries have opposed them, fearing that environmental requirements will be used as yet more barriers to their exports. Negotiations, however, will be limited to the reduction or elimination of tariff barriers on environmental goods and services, and on the relationship between WTO rules and multilateral environmental agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol on climate change.

Investment, competition policy, government procurement and trade facilitation: Inclusion of these issues was one of the most contested items between the North and the South at Doha, resulting in a compromise that negotiations would begin only after the 2003 ministerial conference. The EU and the US wanted to begin immediate negotiations, while developing countries opposed them on the grounds that inclusion of these issues was not in their interests. Some of these issues had been the subject of OECD negotiations on a Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI) in the late 1990s, an effort that was abandoned after non-governmental critics galvanized opposition and obliged some governments to withdraw their support.

Currently, a deadline of 2005 has been set, but realistically negotiations could extend longer.

Towards cheaper AIDS drugs?

A declaration in Doha on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) addressed some of the developing country concerns about that 1994 agreement. It contained stronger language on the primacy of public health over patents for medicines, declaring that "the TRIPS agreement does not and should not prevent members from taking measures to protect public health."

The declaration did not, however, resolve widespread concerns, especially in Africa, about the need to prohibit the patenting of life forms and biological material. Many Southern governments and activists believe that such patenting could erode poor farmers' rights over seeds and other indigenous innovations and bring the unauthorized exploitation of genetic resources by Northern industrial and pharmaceutical companies.

Despite the declaration's shortcomings, many developing countries welcomed it as a step towards making drugs to fight public health emergencies such as AIDS more available to poor people. A number of international groups lobbying for access to cheaper AIDS drugs, like Médécins sans frontières (MSF), also commended the move, saying it would strengthen the hand of developing countries already producing cheaper generic medicines, such as Brazil and India. The US had used the declaration to gain developing countries' concession on the notion of the new round of trade talks.

For the first time, the WTO gives explicit rights to member countries to unilaterally grant licences that allow domestic producers to override patents. Under TRIPS, such "compulsory licensing" was permitted only under emergency circumstances, a stipulation that was removed in Doha.

However, Doha did not resolve "the most obvious problem with TRIPS — limitations on exports of medicines manufactured under a compulsory licence," observes Mr. James Love of the Consumer Project on Technology, a non-governmental organization active on the issue. The Doha meeting discussed but rejected proposals to permit the "parallel exporting" of generic drugs to countries with no means to manufacture the medicines themselves.

The issue now goes back to the WTO TRIPS Council, which is required to make a ruling by the end of 2002. Since most African countries are not in a position to manufacture drugs, they are looking for a decision that will permit them to serve the medical needs of their people at affordable cost.

Waiver on EU trade

As Africa had wanted, the WTO agreed to exempt trade between Europe and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries from global trade rules. Such an exemption allows the EU to continue granting preferential market access under the Cotonou Agreement, which covers cooperation in areas like market access, financial aid and technical assistance. For ACP countries, the waiver was a potential deal breaker — they threatened to oppose the launch of a new round if they did not get it.

A delegate noted that in Doha, "African negotiators remained coherent, coordinated and forceful" in arguing their positions on this issue. During the last two days of the meeting the Africa Group agreed to form a single negotiating bloc with the least developed countries (LDCs) and the ACP. To obtain the waiver, they had to overcome strong objections from banana-producing Latin American countries and tuna exporters such as the Philippines and Thailand, which were concerned about the impact of the ACP's preferential access on their own exports to Europe.

More open consultations

"Unlike in Seattle, Africa has been satisfied with all the stages of consultations and negotiating processes in Doha," Nigerian Commerce Minister Mustafa Bello, who chaired the Africa Group in Doha, declared at the close of the meeting. By

making compromises and agreeing to a new round, he hoped that Africa's development partners would keep their commitments to provide technical assistance to help Africa's negotiators "enhance their understanding of the issues."

One of the major objections of developing country ministers at the Seattle talks was their exclusion from crucial negotiating sessions in so-called "green rooms," where a small group of ministers, mainly from the rich countries, thrashed out final details. In Doha, maintained Mr. Ablassé Ouédraogo, former foreign minister of Burkina Faso and now deputy director general at the WTO, "preference was given to open consultations instead of the method of green rooms."

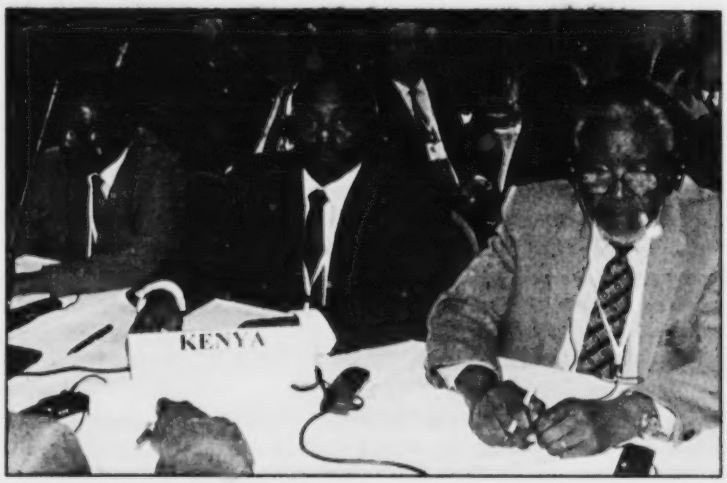
"The effective presence and even activism of ministers from developing countries at this meeting show that there has been a change in the WTO," he argued, "one that raises hopes that the outcomes of Doha will help bring certain corrections in the multilateral trading system."

But the process in Doha was far from ideal. Before the meeting, Nigeria issued a letter attacking the chair of the negotiations, Mr. Stuart Harbinson, for adopting a "non-inclusive attitude by sidetracking the views of the developing and least developed countries." The first draft declaration, which formed the basis of negotiations in Doha, was "empty of contents on the issues of interest to developing countries," the letter charged.

Uproar over agricultural subsidies

One of the most hotly contested issues at Doha was that of high agricultural subsidies in developed countries. Basing themselves on agreements that had previously been negotiated, Africa and other poor regions had expected the North to apply them both in letter and spirit. However, despite a commitment under the Uruguay Round to reduce certain agricultural subsidies by 20 per cent by 2000, overall subsidy levels in the industrialized countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have continued to rise. Payments to farmers now reach some $1 bn a day, equivalent to the total daily income of the world's poorest 1 billion people.

Mr. Moore himself notes that reducing subsidies and barriers to imports from developing countries could provide economic benefits equal to three times the level of aid currently provided by Northern countries. A World Bank report released just before the Doha meeting concurred. It noted that the elimination of such farm subsidies — along with the reduction of high agricultural tariffs and the granting of duty- and quota-free access to OECD markets for exports from the LDCs — could bring developing countries additional earnings of $15,000 bn over a 10-year period.



Kenyan delegation at WTO meeting in Doha: African negotiators presented "coherent, coordinated and forceful" arguments.

France's leaders, facing elections in early 2002, have been desperate to defend subsidies for French farmers, who form an important political constituency. At Doha, France consequently tried to block language in the declaration committing members to eliminate subsidies.

This led to an eleventh-hour drama that nearly scuttled the talks. France held out until the early hours of 14 November when other high-subsidy countries, such as Japan and the Republic of Korea, deserted its camp, and eventually other EU countries abandoned support for the French position. Also pressing France were the US, which is concerned about the effect of EU subsidies on US farmers, the so-called Cairns Group of agriculture-exporting nations, and poor developing countries.

France eventually succumbed after the US proposed face-saving language that countries would go into talks on reducing subsidies, "without prejudging the outcome of the negotiations."

Also on agricultural issues, a group of countries that included Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda and Zimbabwe failed in their demand that a package of reforms, known as the "development box," be included in the Doha declaration to amend the Agreement on Agriculture, another of the Uruguay Round accords. The reforms were intended to allow poor countries to raise import tariffs on staple foods, in order to meet their food security needs and support vulnerable rural populations. They also wanted to be able to directly subsidize crops that provide the main source of livelihood for poor farmers, a practice the agreement currently prohibits. "The agreement protects the interests of the developed countries at the expense of developing countries," Kenyan Minister of Planning Paul Adhu Awiti commented.

Gearing up for the challenge

While Doha's outcome presents some potential opportunities for Africa to negotiate its way out of unfair trade rules, it also poses a formidable challenge. Once again African countries are facing an agenda of negotiations that is much too extensive and complex for their meagre resources and limited personnel to adequately handle. As during the Uruguay Round, this may mean that countries unwittingly take on more commitments without fully understanding their implications.

Negotiators from developing countries will have to pit their skills against the armies of officials, lawyers and lobbyists deployed by the EU, Japan and US. Some African countries, such as Mozambique, have as few as three negotiators at the WTO. Others have none. This will make it hard to ensure that their main concerns are incorporated into the final agreements.

The agenda that came out of Doha "is so huge" that Africa faces a major challenge going into the talks, UN Economic Commission for Africa Executive Secretary K.Y. Amoako told *Africa Recovery*. Therefore, "we need to be very focused." Both the ECA and the UN Conference on Trade and Development are working with African countries to help them prepare for future negotiations.

Whether African nations succeed in pushing their interests at the WTO during the next few years remains to be seen. If they do not, they may ultimately conclude that Doha was more of a sand trap than an oasis. ■

Making trade work for poor women

Villagers in Burkina Faso discover an opening in the global market

By **Ernest Harsch**

They call it "women's gold." When crushed and processed, the nuts of the shea tree yield a vegetable fat known as shea butter. It has long been a common ingredient in local foods and soap, but its qualities also make it a valuable export, for use in the manufacture of chocolate and cosmetics. The tree grows throughout the semi-arid Sahel region of West Africa, but the largest concentration is in Burkina Faso, where exports of shea butter and unprocessed shea kernels brought in CFA5 bn ($7 mn) in 2000, making it the country's third most important export, after cotton and livestock.

The harvesting and processing of shea is primarily an activity of rural women, between 300,000 and 400,000 in Burkina alone. So its earnings directly benefit some of the poorest villagers, in a country classified as one of the poorest in the world.

Not many other developing-country exports can make a similar claim. Even when their prices are not depressed in world markets, coffee, cocoa, cotton, copper and other primary commodity exports yield benefits mainly to governments, corporations and middlemen, along with some producers — most of whom are men and few of whom are among the very poor.

Visiting shea butter projects in Burkina in February 2001, Ms. Noleen Heyzer, executive director of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), emphasized the importance of consciously trying to counter global trade's inclination to further marginalize the poor. "Our support for shea butter producers," she told local reporters, "reflects our determination to increase women's access to the world market and to reverse the prevailing tendencies of globalization, in order to make it work for women and the poor."

A neglected treasure

Shea — known in the local Dioula language as *karité* ("life") — generally grows wild, with little need for any special cultivation or nourishment. Almost all parts of the tree have some practical use. The bark is an ingredient in traditional medicines against certain childhood ailments and minor scrapes and cuts. The shell of the nuts can repel mosquitoes. Above all, the fruity part of the nut, when crushed, yields a vegetable oil that can be used in cooking, soap-making and skin and hair care. Harvesting the nuts and making the butter have traditionally been women's work. Men usually are involved only in transport and marketing.

Unprocessed shea nuts have been exported to Europe for decades, primarily for the manufacture of chocolate in Switzerland and the UK. During the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s, Burkina's earnings from shea exports came in second, after cotton. But the world price for shea nuts plunged in 1986-87, and the quality of Burkina's output declined as well, bringing a reduction in its share of the world market. By 1990, Burkina was exporting only 22,000 tonnes, just a tiny fraction of the shea nuts grown each year.

The government's adoption of structural adjustment policies in the early 1990s further disrupted the harvesting of the nuts and the marketing of shea products. Liberalization of agricultural marketing, through elimination of the price stabilization board, brought considerable instability to domestic trade and left the sector as a whole poorly organized.

Theoretically, the devaluation of the CFA franc in 1994 might have made it possible for local producers of shea nuts and butter to earn more from exports. But Burkinabè women were in an especially weak position to take advantage of any new economic opportunities. An estimated 88 per cent of rural women are illiterate, and have limited technical skills to improve the quality of their butter or acquire information about market trends. Even when they do have the skills or knowledge, few women have access to formal credit to purchase shea butter presses or to better promote their products.

Pounding shea nuts: exports of shea products can boost women's incomes.

Burkina's structural adjustment programme placed a heavy emphasis on exports, but throughout the 1990s the main focus was on cotton. With support from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), major investments were made in reorganizing the sector and providing new seed varieties and other support services. Producer prices for cotton were raised and cotton farmers received credit to purchase fertilizer and pesticides. As a result, cotton production mounted, from 117,000 tonnes in the 1993/94 season, to a projected 400,000 tonnes in 2001/02.

The benefits of cotton — Burkina's "white gold" — are not negligible. The crop bolsters the overall trade balance and provides livelihoods directly to about 2 million of the country's 11 million people. But cotton also brings some costs. When world prices are low, as they currently are, the government may actually take a financial loss by trying to maintain a producer price that is attractive to farmers. The chemical fertilizers and pesticides used in cotton's cultivation tend to damage the soil. And the expansion of land area devoted to cotton sometimes comes at the expense of cereals, further undermining food security in a country of periodic drought and hunger.

In Burkina's cotton-growing zones, according to numerous field studies, social and economic

inequalities also have tended to widen. Since the very poor do not have access to much land or credit for inputs, successful cotton farmers often come from the better-off layers of rural society. And hardly any of them are women.

NGOs and donors take an interest

In 1994, as living conditions worsened for many Burkinabè under the impact of structural adjustment and devaluation, the government announced "six commitments" to help the poor and ensure environmental sustainability. One of the commitments specifically highlighted the potential for promoting women's economic empowerment through development of the shea sector.

In response to government appeals for assistance, a number of external non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and bilateral donors began to support various projects. One of the first initiatives was the Projet national karité (PNK, National Shea Project), launched in 1995 with financial and technical assistance from the Centre canadien d'étude et de coopération internationale (CECI), a Canadian NGO. Then Taiwan came in with major funding, about CFA1 bn ($1.4 mn) up to the end of 1999.

UNIFEM's West Africa regional office, headquartered in Dakar, Senegal, sent a mission to Burkina at the government's request. It found that despite the PNK and other shea projects, women still did not have secure access to means of production. So in 1997 UNIFEM became directly involved, specifically to help women's groups bolster their ability to produce shea butter and to link them up with potential export markets.

Because of the proliferation of shea projects, the government decided the following year to establish a coordinating committee to ensure that the different donor institutions did not operate at cross-purposes or duplicate efforts. The committee enjoys a high political profile, functioning directly under the authority of Ms. Gisèle Guigma, the minister of women's advancement.

Exploring new markets

UNIFEM researchers confirmed that for women producers, the greatest potential income lies in the production and marketing of shea butter, rather than the raw nuts. In 1997, a tonne of unprocessed shea nuts sold domestically for CFA70,000 and externally for CFA100,000. But the same tonne, when processed into shea butter, fetched CFA148,000.

Several foreign cosmetics firms already have begun to use shea butter in their lotions, creams, soaps and other products, including L'Oreal and the Body Shop. UNIFEM helped broker a particularly important deal with L'Occitane, a French cosmetics company. Unlike most firms, L'Occitane does not use intermediaries, but buys its shea butter directly from the Union des groupements Kiswendsida (UGK), a network of more than 100 shea groups. This ensures that a greater share of the revenue goes to the producers, instead of middlemen. In 2001, L'Occitane contracted for 60 tonnes of shea butter, and will likely increase the amount to 90 tonnes in 2002. In addition, it provides the women with training in quality control and pays for the shea butter in advance, giving them greater economic security during the production phase.

"Our support for shea butter producers reflects our determination to increase women's access to the world market and to reverse the prevailing tendencies of globalization, in order to make it work for women and the poor."

— Ms. Noleen Heyzer, executive director, UNIFEM

"It is important for women to have a partner like L'Occitane," says Ms. Félicité Yaméogo, president of the UGK, "because it is they who enable us to sell our products at a higher price." Earning regular incomes, she observes, "helps these women producers earn the respect of their family and the right to speak out in the community."

Until such cosmetics companies took an interest, most exported shea nuts or butter went into the manufacture of chocolates. That market may expand considerably in the near future, following the European Union's decision in 2000 to allow up to 5 per cent of non-cocoa vegetable fats in chocolate manufacturing. Despite its cost, shea butter is particularly favoured because it complements cocoa very well.

According to Ms. Antoinette Ouédraogo, a shea producers' representative, the women's groups can also conquer new markets closer to home, within Burkina and in neighbouring countries. She notes that Burkina's annual shea nut output may be around 850,000 tonnes (the highest anywhere in the world), but only some 50,000 tonnes are currently being harvested.

Skills and sustainability

"Linking women producers to global markets of shea butter is one way to strengthen and build women's economic security," notes Ms. Heyzer. Their economic position is enhanced not only through the additional income they earn, but also through the technical skills and organizational capacities they acquire.

All assistance to the women flows through their own local associations. As of November 2000, there were estimated to be more than 1,300 women shea producers' organizations, covering about half the country's provinces. In some areas, a very sizeable proportion of women belong to such groups — in Sissili, for example, fully one-third of rural women are now engaged in shea production.

Through these producers' groups, women are able to pool their resources to purchase simple presses, greatly reducing the amount of time and labour required to crush the shea nuts. They receive technical training to achieve the standards of quality for shea butter required by foreign buyers, and are able to make marketing contacts through periodic trade fairs.

According to Ms. Fati Bougouma, head of the PNK project, women participating in the shea groups also attend literacy classes, especially in Mooré and Dioula, two of the most widely spoken indigenous languages. This has made it possible to train some of the women to themselves train other shea producers. "With literacy," she says, "women are able to manage better, they understand more."

Along with practical instruction, the various shea projects also seek to educate the general public about environmental sustainability. The shea tree is a protected species. It is illegal to even pick unripened nuts (mature nuts fall to the ground). But the scarcity of other cheap sources of energy often leads to abusive cutting of the trees for firewood, while farmers sometimes burn them to clear land for farming.

The shea tree flourishes best in the wild, and is not easily cultivated. Generally, planted seedlings, even if they grow into trees, tend not to produce usable nuts. However, Mali has had some success in replanting certain varieties of shea trees on a wide scale, and an experimental shea plantation has been started in Burkina, near the town of Nongremassom, with some initially encouraging results.

The most immediate challenge, though, is to protect the existing trees. Says Ms. Bougouma, "Every day, we explain to the people that the shea tree is one of our country's greatest riches." ■

In AIDS fight, men make a difference

Campaigns in Africa seek to change male behaviour

By **Vincent Nwanma**
Lagos

Nigeria, like other African countries, is marked by a "patriarchal society," says Mr. Owei Lakemfa, a leader of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC). "Men think they have the liberty to have as many wives or girlfriends as they want," thereby contributing greatly to the spread of HIV/AIDS. Given this reality, he explains, Nigeria's central trade-union federation believes that "a lot of attention should be given to men" in the struggle to combat the disease.

Mr. Ubon Akpan, a Nigerian media executive, agrees. He highlights the inordinate power that men have over women in economic, political and family life. "The man has the financial backing," he says, "as well as the backing of tradition." In many African cultures, he points out, adultery is considered a "female crime," while men are permitted to "parade" multiple women.

Ms. Nkechi Nwankwo of the Women Leadership Group, a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Nigeria, believes that aspects of traditional culture can themselves be utilized to alter men's behaviour. Although men exercise considerable power over women in traditional African cultures, she says, those norms also obligate men to take care of their wives, children and other family members. "Real men protect women from HIV/AIDS," proclaimed T-shirts worn by participants in a workshop for media practitioners from Nigeria and Ghana organized by the NGO in Jos, Nigeria.

In Zimbabwe, another group, known as Padare/Enkundleni, argues that prevailing notions of male roles and behaviour can be changed, both through more open dialogue with women and through critical self-examination by men themselves. Initially organized by a group of male friends, Padare has since grown into a network of 13 groups of men across Zimbabwe, one of its founders, Mr. Jonah Gokova, told *Africa Recovery* in New York. The organization received an "Africa Leadership Prize" from The Hunger Project, a US-based international NGO, in October.

Prevailing notions of male roles and behaviour can be changed, both through more open dialogue with women and through critical self-examination by men themselves.

"Now it's time to take on the challenge and begin to find a way of discovering who we are and encouraging each other to project a positive image of manhood that is not dependent on the oppression and abuse of women," Mr. Gokova says. In addition to questioning gender stereotypes, Padare addresses the spread of HIV/AIDS, asking men: "What role have men played in perpetuating unhelpful assumptions that have resulted in women taking the burden of HIV and AIDS?"

Such examples of positive action are in line with the "Men Make a Difference" campaign of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and other anti-AIDS organizations. Their goal is to complement prevention programmes for women and girls with work that more directly involves men as well. "The time is ripe to start seeing men not as some kind of problem, but as part of the solution," declared a May 2000 UNAIDS report.*

Pushing condom use

Recognizing that women are at a disadvantage in negotiating sexual relations with men, Nigeria's NLC takes a very practical approach, by trying to convince the many men who belong to its affiliated unions to use condoms. The labour federation does not preach, says Mr. Lakemfa, or tell its members "don't do this or that." It seeks instead to help its members identify the dangers and issues involved. "All you can do is to help a man reach his own conclusions and make his decisions."

The NLC has a membership of about 5 million. It encompasses all industrial labour unions in Nigeria, as well as teachers, non-academic staff at educational institutions up to the universities and employees of the local government councils. "Most of our members are men," Mr. Lakemfa says, adding that the congress's size and composition place it in a "unique position" to carry the anti-AIDS message down to the grassroots.

As part of its campaign against the spread of HIV/AIDS, the NLC has held several workshops of trade union leaders, coordinated by full-time union staff employed specifically to work on its AIDS campaign. "The strategy is to get the union leaders sufficiently enlightened and organized, and let them mobilize their own members," says Mr. Lakemfa. For example, at an AIDS rally on 16 October 2001 in Abuja, the capital, the NLC invited union leaders from the states and mandated them to hold similar rallies in the 36 state capitals. In turn, other rallies and events will be held at the unions' 778 local government council headquarters throughout Nigeria.

In Zimbabwe, Padare/Enkundleni is finding it harder to promote condom use. "There's quite a high level of awareness," says Mr. Gokova, "but it is very difficult for a man who is married to agree to use a condom with his wife, since condoms are [considered to be] for prostitutes." This is one of the beliefs that need to be changed.

**For more information on the UNAIDS Men Make a Difference Campaign, see the Website <www.unaids.org/wac/2001/index.html>. UNAIDS has programme advisers in most African countries who can help involve local groups in the campaign.*

Women's empowerment is also crucial

In the fight against AIDS, intensified efforts are needed to "challenge gender stereotypes and attitudes, and gender inequalities in relation to HIV/AIDS, encouraging the active involvement of men and boys," declares the Declaration of Commitment adopted at the UN General Assembly's 25-27 June special session on the disease. At the same time, says the declaration, the "empowerment of women" is fundamental for reducing their vulnerability to infection.

Specifically, this should include "the elimination of all forms of discrimination, as well as all forms of violence against women and girls, including harmful traditional and customary practices, abuse, rape and other forms of sexual violence, battering and trafficking in women and girls." The declaration also cites discrimination in inheritance. In many parts of Africa, there are no effective legal provisions for women to inherit land and assets from their deceased husbands, often leaving widows destitute. Legal reforms backed by implementation mechanisms would go a long way toward preventing the downward spiral into poverty that makes women and children even more vulnerable to infection.

he says, to achieve some meaningful results in the "Men Make a Difference" campaign.

According to UNAIDS, "In many cultures, fathering a child is regarded as a proof of masculinity. This belief virtually proscribes condom use, providing increased opportunities for HIV infection within the family, and possibly to the next generation through mother-to-child transmission."

Messengers of change

The Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria (PPFN), an affiliate of International Planned Parenthood, has also been involved in the campaign to reach men. It enlists community-based "agents" to talk to men in rural areas about sex, health and family planning issues. The agents include tailors, barbers and other rural professionals who are trained by the PPFN in sexual and reproductive health matters and are expected to share that knowledge with other men as they pursue their trades.

"The idea is that as other men come to patronize them in their shops, the agents will educate them, and also sell health kits to them," says Mr. David Omorebokhae, a PPFN communications officer. The programme is based on the assumption that the selected agents "know the men in the community who are exposed to risk, and can counsel them on the need for change in sexual behaviour and use of contraceptives."

The federation sells the agents non-prescription contraceptives. They in turn sell the contraceptives to the men who visit their shops, retaining a 25 per cent sales commission as an incentive.

Targeting truckers

The PPFN is currently developing another campaign aimed at men, specifically truck drivers. "They are responsible, to a large extent, for the spread of HIV/AIDS," says Mr. Omorebokhae. The first known AIDS patient in Nigeria — discovered in 1986 — was a truck driver.

UNAIDS has identified long-distance truck haulers as a group that is especially exposed to risk in the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Their jobs take them away from homes for days or weeks, and they often move from one region to another, engaging in sexual relations with different women along their routes.

The PPFN programme, launched in October 2001, seeks to recruit and train drivers to educate their fellow truckers about the need for safe sex and other AIDS-prevention issues, starting initially in the states of Edo, Kano, Niger and Jigawa. It will include the use of community theatres to entertain the drivers at major stopover points. So in addition to education, the campaign will provide the drivers with alternative forms of relaxation, other than sex with the commercial sex workers who ply their trade along the truck routes.

In Zimbabwe, the National Employment Council for the Transport Operating Industry works with truck drivers on similar programmes.

Churches also involved

The Assemblies of God Church, Ikate, in Surulere, a suburb of Lagos, holds Sunday evening programmes to educate its 2,000 members about the dangers of HIV/AIDS. It brings in outside speakers, such as Dr. Dickson Eze of the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, who recently explained to parishioners how men are far more likely to infect women with HIV than the other way around.

"We want to create awareness by bringing in experts to speak on this deadly disease," explains Rev. Samuel Oshodipe, the church's pastor. While the education programme is for every member of the church, he says the prime target is the younger members.

The church now makes HIV/AIDS testing a pre-condition for the marriages it conducts, "so that an innocent party does not enter into trouble unknowingly," says Rev. Oshodipe. He realizes how difficult the campaign will be, but believes it will make an impact if "we can preach more and teach more about the purpose of marriage. We should be able to teach men that the purpose is not only sex." The church, he says, emphasizes the Biblical injunction that men honour their wives and give them due respect.

Need for dialogue

Dr. Eze told of one case in which a husband was HIV-positive and the wife HIV-negative, but she insisted on sex without a condom so that she could conceive another child. Such complex responses to the anti-AIDS message emphasize the importance that UNAIDS and other campaigners attach to greater dialogue on sex and family matters among and between the sexes. They insist that men, women, children and other community members talk openly and frankly about issues that were previously regarded as the exclusive preserve of men. Efforts to promote such dialogue require sensitivity and a lack of recrimination, they say, since neither men nor women should be blamed for the disease's spread.

An AIDS awareness advocate showing truck drivers in Zimbabwe the correct way to use a condom.

In talking with their children in particular, says Ms. Nwankwo of the Women Leadership Forum, fathers need to learn to listen to open discussions about sexual subjects that have long been regarded as taboo. They also need to know that "shouting their children down is not the answer."

Meanwhile, ways need to be found to help women negotiate safe sex with their partners, Ms. Nwankwo argues. Improved education will be key, since women "tend not to know what to do." Above all, she says, women "need to be encouraged to be assertive." ■

Momentum builds for African plan

Donors pledge support, as African leaders fine-tune "New Partnership"

By ***Ernest Harsch***

By energetically promoting their new plan for the African continent's peace and development, Africans are determined "to sing their own songs and dance to their own tune," President Thabo Mbeki told a special session of South Africa's parliament. Introducing the plan — the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) — for public discussion on 31 October, he highlighted its many ambitious goals. Not least, these include forging a closer, more open relationship between African governments and their peoples, while simultaneously developing "a new partnership with the rest of the world on the basis of what we, as Africans, have determined is the correct route to our own development."

UNIDO

Africa is fully capable of "accelerating its march toward development," says Malian President Alpha Oumar Konaré.

Neither effort will be easy, Mr. Mbeki acknowledged. Sectors of Africa's elites may resist calls for greater accountability and for utilizing Africa's enormous wealth for the betterment of ordinary citizens, especially the poor. And, quoting the NEPAD programme, he observed that Africa's links with the highly industrialized countries are based on a "development chasm that has widened over centuries of unequal relations." Heavy foreign debt burdens, declining levels of official development assistance, low prices for Africa's main export commodities and limited access to the markets of the industrialized countries are all serious external constraints that NEPAD acknowledges may hamper Africa's ability to fully implement its plan.

The initial response by leaders in key industrial countries has been encouraging, however. On 3 December, for example, some 400 African and Asian delegates gathered in Tokyo to prepare for the third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), scheduled for 2003, a decade after the first Japanese-led effort to build Asian solidarity with Africa's development efforts. Now, with Africa's adoption of the NEPAD, the participants also turned their attention to examining ways the TICAD process can best support the new African programme.

"The world of the 21st century will know stability and prosperity only if Africa's problems are solved," Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi declared at the opening. President Alpha Oumar Konaré of Mali assured him that Africa is fully capable of "accelerating its march toward integration and development." He urged "our partners to join this movement." Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka welcomed NEPAD and pledged continued assistance from Japan, stressing that aid for Africa is especially important now, "at a time when the world economy is slowing down."

'A fairer distribution'

Leaders in Brussels, Ottawa, London and other donor capitals, as well as top officials of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, have been similarly positive. Baroness Amos, parliamentary under-secretary of state in the UK's Foreign Office, focused extensively on NEPAD in a 17 November address. "As Africa puts its house in order," she said, "NEPAD asks that others should play their part by improving the terms on which Africa engages with the global economy. The African leaders in NEPAD are not afraid of globalization. But they want a fairer distribution of its benefits. This means access to markets, better terms of trade, and help to increase resource flows to Africa, both public and private."

The UN system also has welcomed NEPAD. Mr. K.Y. Amoako, executive secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, told *Africa Recovery*: "So the question now is how do we use NEPAD as the framework around which the UN is going to work" in Africa. Already, the UN Administrative Committee on Coordination — which groups the heads of all UN agencies — has held preliminary discussions to explore the issue.

To help fund Africa's development efforts, the NEPAD calls not only for greater and more effective use of the continent's own financial resources, but also more development assistance and debt reduction. In consultation with the Group of Eight industrialized countries, African leaders have agreed to raise issues of public financing at the March 2002 UN conference on "financing for development" in Monterrey, Mexico (see page 22).

In January, however, a separate NEPAD financing conference is to be held in Dakar, Senegal, devoted specifically to the potential contribution of private foreign investment. "We would like the private sector to play in Africa the same role that it played in the development of Europe, the United States and Japan," declares Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade.

Change in name, not substance

NEPAD had its origins in two earlier African initiatives, the Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme, developed at the beginning of 2001 by the presidents of South Africa, Nigeria and Algeria, and the Omega Plan, released around the same time by President Wade (see *Africa Recovery*, June 2001). Then, at the July summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), these two programmes were merged into the New African

Initiative and formally adopted as Africa's common development strategy. At the same summit, African leaders voted to transform the OAU into the new African Union over the next year, thereby seeking to give the continent a more integrated political and economic vision (see *Africa Recovery*, October 2001).

But more work remained to be done. On 23 October, nine African heads of state or government, along with top officials of six other African countries — known as the "implementation committee" — met in Abuja, Nigeria, to put the final touches on their basic framework document. This included some editing of the text, along with a change in name from the New African Initiative to NEPAD.

According to Mr. Wiseman Nkuhlu, an economic adviser to President Mbeki and head of South Africa's NEPAD committee, only the name changed, not the "substance." (The full text of the final version of NEPAD can be found on the Web at: <www.dfa.gov.za/events/nepad.htm>.)

Africans can no longer remain silent about political abuses. "We must be prepared to be criticized constructively by fellow African leaders.

—Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo

Accountability and peace

For NEPAD to succeed, Mr. Nkuhlu stressed, Africa must be able to ensure the political conditions necessary for development to blossom. "We shall deal with all issues such as elections, independence of the judiciary, human rights and the general issue of democracy."

This echoed some of the main themes highlighted at the Abuja meeting. President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, who chairs the NEPAD implementation committee, argued that African leaders could no longer remain silent about the shortcomings or abuses of other African leaders. "The old complaint of undue interference in internal affairs has faded away in contemporary Africa," he noted. "We must talk more and consult more among ourselves. We must be prepared to be criticized constructively by fellow African leaders."

Similarly, President Mbeki told the South African parliament: "We must entrench a human rights culture.... We have to deal with corruption and be accountable to one another for all our actions."

The Abuja meeting decided that a "peer review mechanism" should be established, along with a code of conduct for good political and economic governance, to help keep tabs on the performance of Africa's leaders. Such a review process, Mr. Mbeki insists, should include measures to "ensure compliance," while existing institutions like the African Commission on Human and People's Rights can play an important monitoring role. In addition, once the African Union gets off the ground next year, it will create a new African Court of Justice, which Mr. Mbeki hopes will be able to take up "the issue of good governance."

In a parallel direction, the Abuja meeting also emphasized the need for Africans to better resolve the many armed conflicts that have been plaguing the continent. It established a special subcommittee on "peace and security," chaired by South Africa, with Algeria, Gabon, Mali and Mauritius as members. It will examine ways to strengthen the ability of African countries to work together to prevent and resolve conflicts.

Ending conflict is vital for Africa's development, South African Defence Minister Mosiuoa Lekota pointed out in a speech on NEPAD in late October. "Until peace is secured in Africa," he said, "military expenditures will continue to take a large slice out of the continent's public spending. Securing peace will thus release resources to be redeployed to social needs."

Setting priorities

The New Partnership covers considerable ground, from the fight against poverty and the development of agriculture and industry, to regional economic integration, protection of the environment and the promotion of peace, democracy and human rights. While taking a holistic approach to Africa's development and realizing that action will be needed in many different areas, the leaders gathered in Abuja decided to set up "task teams" to identify specific projects and implementation strategies in five priority areas:

- capacity building for peace and security
- economic and corporate governance
- infrastructure and information and communications technology
- central bank and financial standards
- agriculture and market access.

Individual African presidents will take a direct role in helping to guide the work on specific issues. For example, President Wade will focus on the development of Africa's infrastructure — roads, railways, ports, bridges, dams and irrigation. In early December, he called on volunteer African experts to help survey the state of Africa's infrastructure facilities and identify ways to strengthen and coordinate them so as to expedite greater trade, investment and other interactions among African countries.

President Konaré will chair the "e-Africa Commission," one of the very first NEPAD initiatives, which will develop continent-wide strategies and projects to promote information and communications technology. One of those is the "e-schools" project, to train young people in basic computer skills to further advance their education, acquire jobs or launch self-employed businesses or professions.

"The challenge before us is not just about technology," South African Minister of Communications Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri said in mid-November, while explaining the work of the e-Africa Commission. "It is about creating an African continent, about African history, geography and culture. It is about African languages and about science in an African continent. That is the spirit of NEPAD." ■

Private investment: Africa's 'missing link'

The New Partnership for Africa's Development recognizes the role that private capital can play in meeting Africa's financing needs, Botswana's President Festus Mogae observed at a conference in his country's capital, Gaborone. Called by the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA), an international forum for debating critical African issues, the 25-26 October meeting focused on the potential contributions of the private sector to the continent's development process.

Acquiring more private investment is neither an easy, "all gain and no pain" option, nor is it a panacea, President Mogae acknowledged. But it can provide Africa with access to new capital, technologies, and marketing and management skills. "The private sector," South African Deputy President Jacob Zuma argued, should look beyond the negative images of Africa and see it as "a place to do business."

In many ways, the private sector is Africa's "missing link," Ms. Eveline Herfkens, minister of development cooperation for the Netherlands, commented. However important its role may become, she added, the business community should practice "social responsibility and corporate citizenship" by paying taxes, supporting competition and refusing to engage in corruption.

'Africa needs strong regional institutions'

Interview with ECA Executive Secretary K.Y. Amoako

Mr. K.Y. Amoako is executive secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), headquartered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The ECA was in close consultation with African leaders as they formulated a variety of development initiatives that eventually culminated in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (see page 10). In April 2001, the ECA issued its own "Compact for African Development," which seeks to provide technical and analytical support to the NEPAD. Africa Recovery interviewed Mr. Amoako during a visit to UN headquarters in New York, during which he briefed senior UN officials about the NEPAD's goals and implications.

Why does the New Partnership for Africa's Development place such a heavy emphasis on regional integration within Africa?

K.Y. Amoako: Africans have always, since independence, had this idea of unity, of pan-Africanism. Those are the political aspects of regional integration. But increasingly we are realizing that the economic aspects are also very important, given the small size of African economies. The combined GDP of sub-Saharan Africa is less than that of Belgium. That shows you the constraints.

Look, for example, at the biggest impediment to Africa's competitiveness, transport. In Africa now, it is so very difficult to travel around the continent. For many African countries, especially the landlocked countries, unless you develop transport infrastructure, it's going to be a major constraint to integrating Africa into the global economy. In the case of civil aviation, with so many airlines cut, it's almost impossible to travel from east to west — or anywhere. There is no way we can deal with civil aviation issues until we look at their regional and sub-regional dimensions, by pooling resources, rationalizing air space, and so on.

There's a lot of trade going on within Africa, if you take into account all the illegal trade that moves across borders. But by the official records intra-regional trade is very low, in most cases 4 per cent or so. It can take a long time to transport goods from Nigeria all the way to Côte d'Ivoire, given the number of roadblocks, the number of customs posts, the number of delays that one encounters. So rationalizing transport routes, removing these barriers, would be a good way for the average person, the average trader, to see the benefits of integration. Businessmen are facing the same difficulties in trade and investment across African countries. So rationalizing our tariffs, harmonizing policies across countries, can really make a difference for the average trader.

HIV/AIDS also is a regional problem, the way it travels down transportation routes, by truckers. There are regional dimensions even to peace and security. The problems of conflict in the Great Lakes and the Mano River countries, for example. You cannot talk about resolving conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone or Guinea in isolation from each other.

So for all these political, security and economic reasons, regional integration and regional solutions are important. That's why there's a strong emphasis in the NEPAD on taking a regional approach toward some of Africa's problems.

Africa already has numerous regional and sub-regional institutions, with limited results. What needs to change to make regional integration more of a reality?

Amoako: We've been talking about all these things for years now. You ask, "So, what's new?" We have to look at Africa's own experiences so far — and the experiences in Latin America, Europe and elsewhere — and draw the lessons of what has worked well, and what hasn't worked in the past.

We seem to have a multiplicity of sub-regional organizations. We need to rationalize them. Some countries belong to two, three sometimes. There are conflicts. Countries sign protocols, and never implement them. So we need to look at rationalization of the existing regional institutions and their memberships.

We need to create strong institutions that can deliver on their political and economic mandates. Some of the existing institutions, for example ECCAS [the Economic Community of Central African States], have never really managed to take off. So establishing such institutions, showing that they are efficient, ensuring that their member states pay their dues and building their capacities to deliver is a key dimension.

There also are benefits and losses in the integration process. One of the lessons that we've learned is that you need to put in mechanisms to compensate for the losses. For example, a lot of these countries rely heavily on tariffs for their revenue base. If you suddenly remove all these tariffs, some of these countries are really going to hurt. So we need to look at compensatory mechanisms so that the stronger countries can compensate the smaller ones.

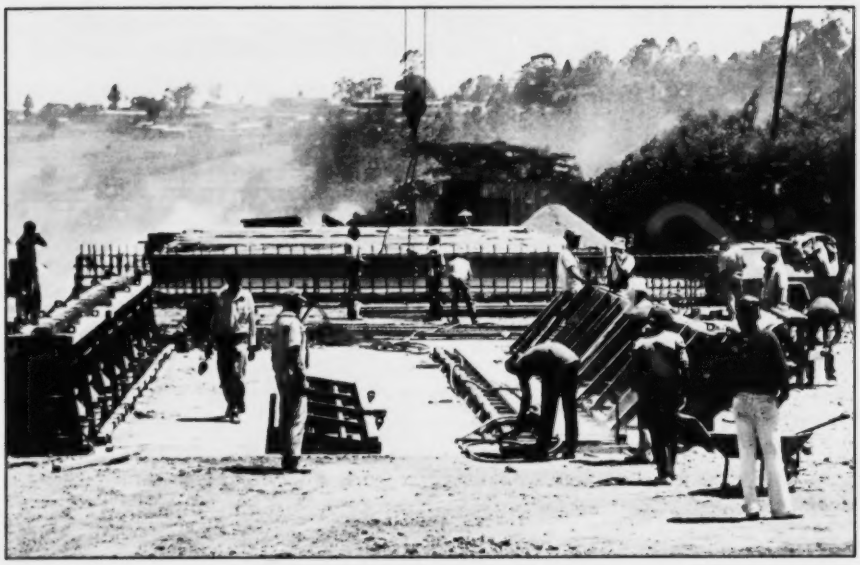
NEPAD: Africa must pool its resources

The following excerpt is from a section of the New Partnership for Africa's Development dealing with regional approaches to development:

Most African countries are small, both in terms of population and per capita incomes. As a consequence of limited markets, they do not offer attractive returns to potential investors, while progress in diversifying production and exports is retarded. This limits investment in essential infrastructure that depends on economies of scale for viability.

These economic conditions point to the need for African countries to pool their resources and enhance regional development and economic integration on the continent, in order to improve international competitiveness. The five sub-regional economic groupings of the continent must, therefore, be strengthened.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development focuses on the provision of essential regional public goods (such as transport, energy, water, ICT [information and communications technology], disease eradication, environmental preservation, and provision of regional research capacity), as well as the promotion of intra-African trade and investments. The focus will be on rationalizing the institutional framework for economic integration, by identifying common projects compatible with integrated country and regional development programmes, and on the harmonization of economic and investment policies and practices. There needs to be coordination of national sector policies and effective monitoring of regional decisions.



UN Mission/Eskinder

The "Trans-Africa Highway" under construction in Kenya: African countries need better transportation links to each other.

Within the framework of structural adjustment, economic policies in Africa have been negotiated on a national level between individual African governments and the donors. Some critics argue that these national programmes sometimes undercut regional goals. How valid were those criticisms?

Amoako: Those criticisms were very valid. If you look at the trade liberalization that has gone on in Africa, it has been one of unilateral trade liberalization in a context of structural adjustment programmes. Industrial policies were in the context of national programmes and they did not take into account a sub-regional dimension.

That's why NEPAD at least could offer a different basis. It gives a common framework, policies and programmes for African countries to buy into, with both national and sub-regional dimensions. That should aid our relationship with our donor partners and the international institutions, in terms of formulating policies that are consistent within and across countries. We should see more effort in that direction. But the lead has to come from Africa.

The Omega Plan of Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade saw foreign direct investment as a major new source of financing for Africa. But the NEPAD seems to regard significant foreign investment mainly as a long-term possibility, and emphasizes getting more development assistance, debt relief and other traditional sources of financing in the short- to medium-term. Realistically, what kinds of financing can Africa expect to attract?

Amoako: It's not an either/or question. Maybe you can look at it as short-term, medium-term, and long-term. I think that appears valid. But you need to have a holistic approach toward financing Africa's development. Taking off from the broad objectives of development — the need to reduce poverty, what the financing requirements are and the level of domestic resource mobilization that's feasible now — you come up with a huge financing gap, clearly. The question is, how do you fill that gap?

Obviously, there's diversity in Africa. Countries are at different phases. But by and large, for most countries, you need more ODA [official development assistance], you need to attract more foreign investment, you need to work on debt relief. It's how you frame the financing issues.

The NEPAD, which brings together the Omega Plan and the MAP [Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme], clearly takes a more holistic view of financing development in Africa. So it's calling for not just more ODA flows, but also improving the terms of the debate and shifting the paradigm between Africa and its partners. We need *more effective* ODA flows; the quality becomes important. The NEPAD calls for a transformation of the relationship between Africa and its development partners, in which Africa is taking more of the ownership. We are calling for more mutual accountability, on the side of both Africa and its development partners.

That's why the whole question of governance issues are fundamental to the New Partnership. Good economic, corporate and political governance are essential prerequisites for getting both the ODA flows to come in, and the foreign and domestic private investment to come in. Various forms of financing are going to be important. But certain basic principles need to be put in place in order to attract financing of whatever kind.

What needs to change to make such partnership possible?

Amoako: First, a compact between Africa's leaders and her people, where certain fundamental things are gotten right — good governance, economic and corporate governance. You put in sound public finance management systems, more transparency in the way you do your budgeting, better planning, and all that. That's fundamental in order to be able to use resources more effectively. So it starts within Africa. It starts with us first.

Once you get the right policies, then a transformed relationship with the donors calls for less conditionality and more resources — predictable and long-term resources — coming in to support the country programmes.

A lot of the ineffectiveness in aid so far has been due to the proliferation of projects — too many projects, too much donor conditionality, a lack of harmonization of donor policies. There are African finance ministers who have to be accountable to 15, 20, 30 different types of accounts for the same type of project. In fact, there are some countries where so many donor resources are going in, but the government does not even fully know the amount and the types of aid.

We cannot afford that kind of relationship any more. We need to get the donors to harmonize their policies and their programmes within African countries. And they need to provide the resources on a more sustainable, long-term basis, moving money more toward sector lending and budget support.

And then there is the issue of mutual accountability. How do you measure the results of aid? Who holds whom accountable? In countries like Tanzania, there are some very interesting experiments now, where many of the donors have collectively agreed that we will also be evaluating donor policies, to see how they are meeting their part of the bargain. It's not just one-sided conditionality.

But the fundamental thing is that Africa needs to get its act together. And once it does, you can expect the donors to be more forthcoming. ■

UN aid appeal: don't forget Africa

Most of the world's humanitarian emergencies are in Africa

The crisis in Afghanistan, with its huge numbers of refugees and hungry people, has captured the attention of the international media and the major donor powers and agencies. With about 17 million Afghans believed to be affected by either war or drought, the scale of that humanitarian tragedy clearly is enormous. This was reflected in the launch of the UN's "consolidated inter-agency appeals" on 26 November, in which the emergency aid requirements of all the different UN agencies, for all countries in the world, were presented to donors for the coming year. Based on estimates that emergency food, medical supplies and other assistance should be delivered to some 7.5 million Afghans in greatest need, the amount of the appeal for that country was the highest by far, at $657.2 mn.

However, during the launch in New York and the following day in seven other cities in major donor countries, UN officials sounded a common theme: do not let the preoccupation with Afghanistan lead to neglect of other pressing humanitarian crises. "I urge you to forget none of them," UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, noting that the 2002 consolidated appeals cover 17 countries and regions in addition to Afghanistan (see table).

Ms. Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, executive director of the UN Population Fund, concurred: "Let us not stop at Afghanistan, because there are many more countries, especially in Africa, that need our urgent help. In fact, more than two-thirds of the countries covered in today's appeals are in Africa."

Mr. Jostein Leiro, representing the Norwegian mission to the UN, reflected some donor recognition of the problem. "Today, the focus of the international community is directed towards Afghanistan, while other humanitarian crises attract less attention," he observed. "We must not forget the continuing human sufferings in Africa and elsewhere."

To what extent such calls will be heeded is uncertain. As of 6 November 2001, largely before the escalation of the Afghanistan crisis, relief agencies active in Africa received less than half the $1.6 bn they had requested for the year. This ranged from a high of 77 per cent in Tanzania (mainly for refugees from Burundi) to lows of 20.1 per cent in Somalia and 26.3 per cent in the Congo Republic.

The office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in a report released on 4 December to mark the 50th anniversary of its establishment, also noted a "disparity" in donor assistance to the emergency needs of refugees and internally displaced people. In 1999, UNHCR reported, the agency was able to obtain 90 per cent of the funds it needed for the former Yugoslavia, but just 60 per cent for countries such as Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The donor response "varies according to the strategic importance governments place on particular operations and crises."

In the DRC today, some 16 million people — a third of the entire population — are facing critical food needs, Mr. Atoki Ileka, the Congolese representative, told the consolidated appeals meeting in New York. However, since many of them cannot be effectively reached, the UN appeal for $194.1 mn covers the needs of just 2.4 million Congolese. Because of the civil war in that country, Mr. Ileka reported, practically the entire health system has been destroyed. "Everything needs to be rebuilt."

Angola, Burundi, Eritrea, Sierra Leone, Somalia (see page 28), Sudan and other African countries also have very high needs, many of them because of recent or on-going wars. Altogether, the UN agencies estimate, Africa's emergency needs in 2002 will total nearly $1.2 bn, for about 14.6 million people.■

UN humanitarian aid appeals, 2002

Country/region	Beneficiaries	Amount ($ mn)
Afghanistan	7,500,000	657.2
Korea, Dem. People's Rep	6,500,000	258.1
Southeastern Europe	2,000,000	236.7
Angola	2,500,000	232.8
Sudan	3,000,000	194.5
Dem. Rep of Congo	2,400,000	194.1
Eritrea	1,363,463	120.5
Burundi	1,000,000	107.9
Sierra Leone	1,357,090	88.6
Somalia	750,000	83.7
Tajikistan	1,369,000	76.6
Uganda	717,532	68.1
Guinea	851,000	58.5
Indonesia	250,000	40.8
North Caucasus (Russia)	750,000	31.9
Liberia	655,000	17.2
Great Lakes Region	*	13.1
West Africa	*	5.9
Total	32,963,085	2,486.1

* Number of beneficiaries included in specific country appeal

Source: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UNHCR/ R. Chalasani

African refugee children receiving food aid: donors respond differently, depending on a country's "strategic importance."

'Conflict diamonds' evade UN sanctions

Improvements in Sierra Leone, but continuing violations in Angola and Liberia

By **Michael Fleshman**

Diamonds and other natural resources are continuing to finance armed conflicts in Angola and the Mano River Union states of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea despite improved enforcement and monitoring of UN arms and diamond sanctions. Reports submitted to the Security Council in October charge that both the Angolan rebel leader, Mr. Jonas Savimbi, and the Liberian government still violate the trade and weapons bans with the help of a global network of arms dealers, diamond merchants and natural resources companies. Stronger regulation of the mining industries in Angola and Sierra Leone is helping to reduce rebels' access to the stones, the Council was told. But the absence of international controls on diamond exports has allowed sanctions-busters to evade national regulations by smuggling them to neighbouring countries for sale on world markets.

Council investigators continued the controversial practice of "naming and shaming" governments, businesses and individuals suspected of sanctions busting, and recommended a number of new measures to choke off the trade in natural resources for weapons. UN officials cautioned, however, that additional sanctions against Liberia could worsen an already-desperate economic situation, saying that any additional sanctions should be carefully targeted at the government and accompanied by increased humanitarian aid.

The reports are part of an ongoing effort by the Security Council and Secretary-General Kofi Annan to make sanctions more effective instruments for the maintenance of international peace (see *Africa Recovery*, January 2001). The Monitoring Mechanism on Sanctions Against Angola and the Panel of Experts on Liberia are among the committees established by the Council to investigate sanctions violations and monitor international compliance.

Angola's 'vanishing diamonds'

The UN imposed the first of a series of arms, travel and financial sanctions on the Angolan rebel movement, UNITA, in 1993 in an effort to weaken its war-making capacity. But lax enforcement by member states and UNITA's seizure of many of Angola's diamond producing areas allowed the movement to finance its operations with smuggled gems and to re-arm with impunity. At one point, the report asserts, UNITA was the single largest producer of diamonds in Angola. In 1998 UNITA abrogated a peace agreement and returned to war — a move that prompted the Security Council to investigate Mr. Savimbi's sanctions-busting operation and helped focus international attention on the link between diamonds and conflict in Africa.

In their 12 October report, investigators noted that the recapture of many of the country's major diamond producing areas by government forces, and reform of Angola's mining industry, has reduced UNITA's access to rough stones and hampered its ability to sell them on world markets. But implementation of the reform programme, which includes registration of independent miners and dealers and a requirement that all uncut gems exported from the country be certified, has failed to halt UNITA's use of diamonds to finance the war. Last year the Angolan government estimated that the rebels still earned between $90 mn and $125 mn from the stones, known as "conflict diamonds."

Mining diamonds in Sierra Leone: despite stricter controls, diamond smuggling continues to finance arms purchases for African wars.

Photo Pictures, Robert Koch

Investigators also found evidence of a "shadow buying structure" in Angola operating outside the government certification programme. A recent crackdown by the government, including the de-certification of 400 traders suspected of smuggling, should reduce the illicit flow of diamonds to other states. The Council is examining 16 international diamond companies with offices in Antwerp for possible involvement in the scheme, and has forwarded information on one firm to the Belgian government for further action.

Overall, between $350 mn and $420 mn worth of Angolan diamonds were smuggled into neighbouring countries in 2000. That figure represents about half of Angola's yearly output and 5 per cent of annual rough diamond sales worldwide.

Sanctions require states to seize all Angolan diamonds entering their territory without a government certificate of origin. Yet, "to date not a single parcel of illicit Angolan gems has been intercepted anywhere," the report notes. "These diamonds seem to vanish into thin air.... How is this even possible, given the magnitude of the trade?... Perhaps more importantly, why is it possible for diamonds to vanish?"

One answer is that they disappear into the legitimate trade. Investigators report that a large volume of Angolan stones are taken clandestinely to third countries where they are mixed with legally mined diamonds and sent on to Antwerp or Tel Aviv for finishing. Adoption of a global certification programme for all uncut diamonds would make smuggling more difficult by requiring that all stones be identified and traced in shipment regardless of

Protests for Human Rights

US students protest "conflict diamonds": diamond companies and exporting countries worry about impact on legitimate trade.

country of origin. In late November the major diamond-producing countries reached agreement on such a programme. Concerns about the legality of a mandatory certification scheme under world trade rules may weaken the effectiveness of the accord, known as the Kimberley Process (see next page).

UNITA's arms dealers

UNITA has also found ways to evade stricter enforcement of arms sanctions. The Council is focussing increasingly on the role of a former Soviet Air Force officer, Mr. Victor Bout, and his network of airfreight companies in the shipment of weapons. According to the report, UNITA continues to receive the bulk of its weapons from Eastern Europe, operating through a handful of trusted arms dealers using forged documents and aircraft supplied by Mr. Bout.

There has been stronger compliance with arms sanctions since the July 2000 launch of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Ad-Hoc Committee on UNITA Sanctions, the Council learned. But gaps in the Southern African regional air traffic control system make it very difficult to monitor sanctions-busting flights into rebel-held areas.

The report also notes that UNITA's diplomatic offices around the world have now been closed in accordance with the ban on travel and diplomatic representation. Senior rebel officials, however, continue to operate unofficially in countries of particular interest to UNITA, including Belgium, the US and Burkina Faso. The report does point to "positive" actions by some other countries to enforce the travel and representation bans, including Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and France.

Controversy over Liberia sanctions

On 26 October, the Panel of Experts on Liberia submitted to the Council its investigation into the government's compliance with Resolution 1343 of March 2001 imposing arms, diamonds and travel sanctions on the government for its alleged support of rebel movements in Sierra Leone and Guinea. The panel noted that since the imposition of sanctions "there are significant signs of improvement" in the region's political and security situation — particularly the restoration of peace in Sierra Leone and the resumption of dialogue between Liberia and Guinea over guerrilla attacks in the border area.

The report concluded, however, that while the Liberian authorities have taken steps to comply with some requirements of the resolution, particularly those provisions grounding Liberian aircraft suspected of sanctions busting, they have continued to violate the prohibitions on diamond sales and arms imports. The flight ban was prompted by widespread fraud in the national aircraft registry — irregularities that made it impossible to monitor aircraft movements and were "directly linked" to violations of the arms embargo. The panel also concluded, however, that many of the registry problems dated from the chaotic period of the Liberian civil war, and that the newly appointed civil aviation director was making a good-faith effort to identify and re-register the country's air fleet.

On weapons sanctions, the panel charged that, despite the imposition of two arms embargoes on Liberia — first in 1992 in response to the civil war and again in March 2001 — "a steady flow of new arms continued to enter into the country." The panel provided detailed accounts of five violations of the embargo during 2000 to back up the charges. The allegations were dismissed as "void of any substantive relevance" by Liberian Foreign Minister Monie R. Captan, during the Security Council debate on the report on 5 November 2001. Mr. Captan noted that the alleged violations all occurred prior to imposition of the new measures. The Council also failed to account for Liberia's national security needs in light of attacks by Liberian rebel groups, he said. The government charges that the dissidents operate from bases in Guinea.

Tracing the money

The report charged that funding for sanctions-busting activities was being conducted outside the official budget, and often involved payments to suppliers directly from private companies and contractors doing business with the government. The panel recommended that the Security Council consider lifting the flight ban but impose additional measures to reduce funds available for weapons purchases. The call for additional sanctions on the Liberian economy, however, proved as controversial as the charges of sanctions violations.

One source of finance for sanctions-busting, the report asserts, are revenues generated by the use of Liberia as a "flag of convenience" by some 1,700 ships around the world. In 2000, registration fees netted the Liberian government an estimated $18 mn, funds that are supposed to be paid into central government accounts. Sanctions investigators, however, charge that a portion of those funds, instead of reaching the national treasury, were deposited into private accounts for arms purchases, with a corresponding drop in government income. The panel recommended that maritime registration fees be placed in an escrow account to prevent further diversion into sanctions-busting and other off-budget purposes.

The growing Liberian timber industry, which was expected to generate some $25 mn in government revenue in 2001, has also come under Council scrutiny for its role in violating sanctions. According to investigators, Mr. Charles Taylor, the Liberian president, has awarded valuable logging concessions to companies controlled by personal friends and family members.

These firms in turn provide money and logistics for sanctions-busting activities. The head of one multinational logging firm, the report charges, flew a shipment of weapons to Liberia in 1999 in his private plane. Other companies are also allegedly involved in government arms smuggling operations. The panel recommended that the Council ban the industry's principal foreign exchange earner, unfinished "round logs," beginning in July 2002. Investigators also urged the Liberian government and the International Monetary Fund to jointly investigate the handling of timber revenues.

Mr. Ed Tsui, director of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, however, cautioned the Council about the humanitarian impact of further sanctions. Liberia, he noted, had been devastated by the 1989-96 civil war and is in "a humanitarian and human rights crisis." Gross domestic product in 2000 was just $177 per person — less than half the 1980 level, and donor support for humanitarian assistance programmes "has been quite disappointing." Sanctions on the timber industry, he told the Council during the 5 November debate, would probably eliminate 10,000 relatively well-paid jobs, and affect 90,000 people. Sanctions on another major sector of the Liberian economy, rubber, he argued, could devastate the family finances of as many as 225,000 people and "particularly affect the most vulnerable in the Liberian population."

Malian Ambassador Moctar Ouane echoed Mr. Tsui's concerns, noting that the Council has taken steps in recent years to target economic sanctions to avoid injuring civilian populations. Failure to do so in Liberia, he said, risked the "credibility" of the measures. He reminded the Council that the Economic Community of West African States has called for the resumption of development aid to Liberia. Further sanctions alone, he said, "cannot restore peace in West Africa.... Sanctions are not the only means available, nor are they necessarily the best solution available to us."

On diamonds, the panel noted that the UN ban on the export of Liberian diamonds had largely achieved its purpose — to end the movement of smuggled Sierra Leonean diamonds into Liberia in exchange for arms. The report conceded, however, "The embargo has created a different problem. Since it is impossible to sell Liberian rough [diamonds] officially, dealers are seeking to camouflage their Liberian diamonds as those from neighbouring markets" — including Sierra Leone. Ironically, sanctions intended to prevent Sierra Leonean diamonds from being smuggled into Liberia were causing legitimately mined Liberian diamonds to be smuggled into Sierra Leone.

'Kimberley process' accord

The solution to the new problem, the panel observed, would be the introduction of a "credible and transparent" certification scheme for Liberian-origin stones similar to those adopted by Angola and Sierra Leone. The report also noted, however, that the effectiveness of national certification programmes in controlling the trade in conflict diamonds would be limited until they become part of a global regulatory framework requiring rough diamond importing and exporting countries to certify the country of origin and legal export of all stones.

Efforts to develop such a worldwide scheme took an important step forward in Gaborone, Botswana, on 28 November, when negotiators for dozens of diamond exporting and importing countries ended over a year of negotiations and agreed on the "essential elements" of an international certification programme. The protracted negotiations, known as "the Kimberley Process" after the South African diamond mining centre, would require the use of tamper-proof containers for all rough diamond shipments and a Kimberley Process Certificate identifying the country of origin of the stones, the size and value of each shipment and the identity of the exporting authority (see box).

The agreement would establish minimum national standards for the handling of stones to weed out conflict diamonds from shipments of legally mined gems. The use of diamonds to fund armed conflicts, the negotiators declared, could be "seriously reduced" by the certification scheme. Diamond producing countries are also concerned that boycotts by consumers upset about conflict diamonds could damage the legitimate trade. But the governments were unable to reach agreement on some key aspects of the certification programme, including whether signatory states should prohibit the import or export of uncut diamonds to non-signatories.

The US, Canada and Japan have expressed concerns that efforts to bar non-signatory states from trading in uncut diamonds may run afoul of World Trade Organization (WTO) rules governing free trade. Human rights organizations and many governments counter that the certification plan must be universal and mandatory if it is to succeed. A working group of Kimberley Process countries will examine ways to make the agreement compatible with trade liberalization policies while details of the certification plan are finalized.

"I don't think we'll have a problem," said Mr. Kennedy Hamutenya, the chief Namibian negotiator at Gaborone. "The WTO should be able to give us the green light." The chief US negotiator, Mr. Alan Eastham, agreed that while free trade concerns needed to be addressed, the issue was unlikely to jeopardize the certification effort. "We'll find a way." The UN General Assembly must approve the certification agreement, with implementation scheduled to begin at the end of 2002. ■

Kimberley agreement on global diamond regulations

On 28 November the world's leading diamond exporting and importing states concluded over a year of negotiations with agreement on the "essential elements" of a system of regulations for the handling and trade of uncut diamonds, some of which finance conflicts in Africa. Declaring that "urgent international action is imperative to prevent the problem of 'conflict diamonds' from negatively affecting the trade in legitimate diamonds," participants in the "Kimberley process" talks agreed to:

- effective national controls to weed out "conflict diamonds" from shipments of legitimately mined stones
- use of tamper-proof containers for imports and exports
- national legislation to enforce the agreement
- forgery-resistant certificates to accompany all shipments of rough diamonds, indicating country of origin, issuing authority, weight in carats and value of each shipment, identity of importers and exporters, and confirmation that Kimberley Process controls have been followed
- effective methods to track diamond shipments in transit
- prohibition of imports of uncut diamonds from, or their export to, countries outside the Kimberley Process agreement
- collection and exchange of data on imports and exports of uncut stones
- periodic review of compliance and enforcement measures
- all shipments of uncut diamonds to comply with the Kimberley requirements before the end of 2002.

Small arms in Africa: counting the cost of gun violence

from page 1

Johannesburg. While the international community searches, so far unsuccessfully, for agreement on the regulation of the global trade in small arms, a growing number of African countries, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations are grappling with the human and development consequences of gun violence and seeking to reduce both the supply and the demand for what Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called "the weapons of choice for the killers of our time."

Reducing the availability and use of small arms in places where fighting has ended has become increasingly important to Africa's development prospects as the number of conflicts has increased over the past decade. The widespread abuse of weapons diverts scarce government resources from health and education to public security, discourages investment and economic growth, and deprives developing countries of the skills and talents of the victims of small arms.

Impact Visuals: Tsar Vorter

Rebels in Sierra Leone: small arms not only take many lives, but also exact a heavy toll on African societies and economies.

Millions of light arms — lightweight, highly portable, and devastatingly effective in the hands of even young or poorly trained users — were shipped to Africa during the Cold War to equip anti-colonial fighters, newly independent states and superpower proxy forces alike. The collapse of the Soviet bloc saw a new flood of small arms entering Africa as manufacturers put additional millions of surplus Cold War-era weapons on the international arms market at cut-rate prices.

Years later, these durable killing machines fight on in the hands of insurgents, local militias, criminal organizations and ordinary people left vulnerable to violence by ineffective policing and simmering civil conflict. In some parts of Africa, a Soviet-designed AK-47 assault rifle, coveted for its simplicity and firepower, can be purchased for as little as $6, or traded for a chicken or sack of grain. In 1999 the Red Cross estimated that in the Somali capital of Mogadishu alone, the city's 1.3 million residents possessed over a million guns — among an estimated 550 mn small arms in circulation worldwide.

"The proliferation of light weapons in Africa poses a major threat to development," noted Ms. Virginia Gamba, the former director of the Arms Management Programme of the South African Institute for Security Studies (ISS). Their low cost, ease of use and availability "may escalate conflicts, undermine peace agreements, intensify [the] violence and impact of crime, impede economic and social development and hinder the development of social stability, democracy and good governance." In July 2001 the US government estimated that small arms are fuelling conflicts in 22 African countries that have taken 7-8 million lives. In Africa guns are not just the weapons of choice but also weapons of mass destruction.

When weapons outlast wars

The development impact of war on individuals, communities and states is unambiguous and well documented. By its nature — and sometimes by design — modern warfare destroys economic and social infrastructure, uproots populations, paralyses economic activity, disrupts vital health and education services and diverts financial resources from development to defence.

Less well understood is the impact of small arms on development in post-conflict situations. Unlike heavy weapons systems, which can be costly to acquire and operate and comparatively easy to decommission or monitor, the end of a war does not necessarily bring an end to the use of light weapons.

As Robert Muggah and Peter Bachelor, analysts for the Small Arms Survey, a European research institute, report in a recent study, *Development Held Hostage: Assessing the Effects of Small Arms on Human Development*, "the durability of small arms ensures that once they are present in a country they present a continuous risk — especially in societies where there are large accumulations of weapons.... They frequently outlast peace agreements and are taken up again in the post-conflict period" by criminal gangs, vigilantes, dissidents, and individuals concerned about personal security. In areas where state security is weak or absent, possession of a gun can be a matter of survival, either to seize food and other vital resources or as protection from attack. In other places the low cost and ready availability of firearms can promote

what experts call a "culture of violence," where gun ownership becomes a symbol of power and status, and gun violence a first resort for the settlement of personal and political disputes.

South Africa has suffered considerably from the misuse of small arms since the end of apartheid in 1994, and has moved aggressively to reduce their availability. Unlike most other African countries, South Africa has a large number of small arms in legal circulation, with over 4 mn guns registered to private, primarily white, owners at the end of 1999. In common with countries bordering conflict areas in West and East Africa, however, South Africa has also suffered from the illegal influx from neighbouring states of weapons that have outlasted the wars they were intended to fight.

In the 1970s, the apartheid government began supplying thousands of tons of arms and ammunition to its domestic and regional allies for the defence of white minority rule. An estimated 30 tonnes of guns and explosives were smuggled into the country by the anti-apartheid movements, which also left arms stockpiles at their base camps in surrounding countries. As many as 4 mn weapons from various sources have illegally found their way into the hands of South African civilians. The presence of so many weapons outside government control has overwhelmed law enforcement efforts, contributed to crime and public insecurity, hampered economic growth and caused tragic and avoidable deaths and injuries.

Measuring the effects

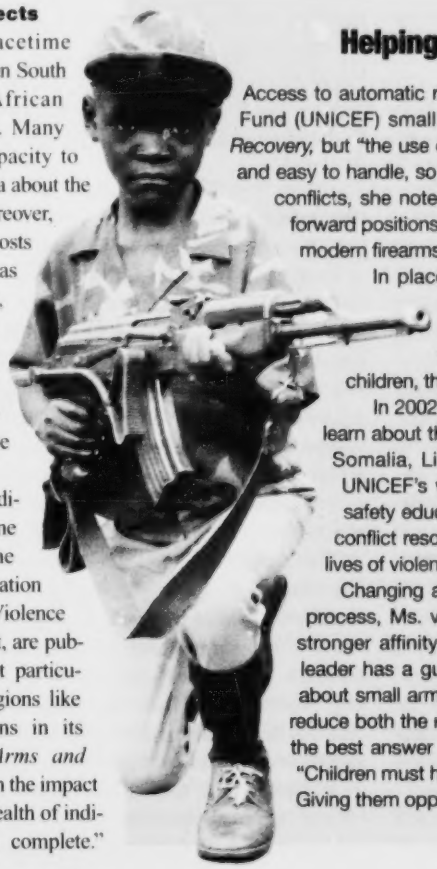
Assessing the peacetime impact of small arms on South Africa and other African countries is difficult. Many countries lack the capacity to collect and analyze data about the use of small arms. Moreover, many of the greatest costs to development, such as deferred investment, reduced economic activity and lost productivity due to injury and insecurity, are indirect, and therefore hard to measure.

One of the best indicators, said Dr. Etienne Krug, director of the World Health Organization (WHO), Injuries and Violence Prevention Department, are public health records. But particularly in developing regions like Africa, WHO cautions in its 2001 report *Small Arms and Global Health*, "data on the impact of small arms on the health of individuals are far from complete." Statistics are vital for the development of effective strategies to meet the medical challenges of guns, he noted, but donors are often unwilling to fund data collection as part of health projects.

Globally, WHO put the number of violent deaths from all causes in 1998 at 2.3 million. Several hundred thousand of these are believed to be gunshot victims: 42 per cent as a result of suicide, 32 per cent by murder and 26 per cent by war. The study found a correlation between gun violence and development: death rates in low and middle-income countries, at 42 per 100,000 people, were more than double the 17 per 100,000 rate found in high-income countries. Many hundreds of thousands more people survive gun injuries, but require costly medical care and often suffer permanent physical and emotional disabilities. The absence of sophisticated emergency medical facilities, however, means that far more gunshot injuries prove fatal to victims in developing countries than in the industrialized North.

The widespread abuse of weapons diverts scarce government resources from health and education to public security, discourages investment and economic growth, and deprives developing countries of the skills and talents of the victims of small arms.

The direct cost can be high. A 1997 study of 1,000 gunshot victims in South Africa put the total cost of hospital treatment at nearly R30 mn (then $6.5 mn). The indirect impact of gun violence



Helping children say 'no' to guns

Access to automatic rifles by itself does not create child soldiers, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) small arms project officer Ms. Lieke van de Wiel told *Africa Recovery*, but "the use of small arms does change their role. Small arms are small and easy to handle, so any kid becomes a professional killer in no time." In earlier conflicts, she noted, children might have carried supplies or been placed in forward positions to draw enemy fire away from other soldiers. With powerful modern firearms, however, "They can be effective killers right away."

In places saturated with weapons, "Children don't necessarily know guns are dangerous," Ms. van de Wiel explained. "Parents have them in the home so children are exposed to them all the time. If small arms are in the daily lives of children, they must learn how to minimize the risk."

In 2002 UNICEF will launch a pilot programme to help adolescents learn about the danger of small arms and alternatives to gun violence in Somalia, Liberia, Kosovo and Tajikistan. The project will build on UNICEF's work with existing youth groups and combine basic gun safety education with leadership development, vocational training and conflict resolution techniques to give boys and girls real alternatives to lives of violence and fear.

Changing attitudes and then behaviour is always a slow and difficult process, Ms. van de Wiel cautioned, especially for boys. "Boys have a stronger affinity to guns because their older brother or father or village leader has a gun. They're 'cool.'" For that reason, she noted, education about small arms must begin at an early age as part of an overall effort to reduce both the romantic image and the social acceptability of gun use. But the best answer to guns is social and economic progress, she concluded. "Children must have a future that doesn't depend on small arms for survival. Giving them opportunity is the best alternative to violence."

on public health systems, asserts WHO, also is huge. Treating large numbers of patients with gunshot wounds "has a draining effect on basic health care and diverts much-needed resources from other health and social services."

Crime rates rising

Crime statistics can also provide a measurement of the impact of small arms on development. Because apartheid-era crime reports in South Africa are considered unreliable, ISS researchers analyzed post-apartheid police records and reported a "marked increase" in the use of firearms to commit murder, from 41.5 per cent of homicides in 1994 to 49.3 per cent in 1998, even as the overall number of murders decreased. The use of small arms in robberies also increased significantly, from 51,000 incidents in 1996 to 69,500 in 1998, although the overall number of robberies involving weapons of all kinds increased only marginally.

The governments of some of the African countries most affected by gun violence, including Mali and South Africa, are moving aggressively to challenge the culture of violence with the strong support of their civil societies and the UN.

The increase, the analysts argue, "shows that more criminals are arming themselves" and that "access to firearms has become easier compared to previous years." By 2000 the South African government found that homicide, primarily involving firearms, was the leading cause of death among young men aged 15-21 and that gunshots from all causes (murder, suicide and accidents) were the single largest cause of non-natural death in the country.

The death and injury of so many young people has profound consequences for development — reducing the number of educated people entering the work force, diverting family and social resources into the care of those disabled by gun violence and forcing the government to redirect funding from social services to law enforcement. Last year, for example, South Africa spent $1.96 bn on law enforcement and $1.56 bn on health.

In Kenya, the illegal influx of small arms from surrounding states appears to be fuelling violence far from the volatile northern border areas. The increased availability of weapons in Nairobi, for example, may be a factor in the rising number of murders and the use of violence in burglaries, although Kenyan police report that the number of reported robberies themselves has declined. A recent survey by the UN Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the Kenyan government found that 75 per cent of city residents felt insecure at night despite an increased police presence in high crime areas.

Men, women and guns

The disproportionate impact of weapons on young men has been widely noted in conflict situations. Much the same is true in peacetime. According to WHO, males of all ages comprise 80 per cent of homicide victims and males are 3 to 6 times more likely than females to commit murder, with both victims and assailants drawn largely from the ranks of men aged 18-49.

Even where guns are not widely used, said UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) small arms project officer Ms. Lieke van de Wiel, "the social fabric of society really changes if the weapons are present. If you go to the post office and the man next to you has a gun, you feel much less secure. It's the power issue." The implicit threat of violence, Ms. Van de Wiel noted, is particularly frightening for women. "If there are men around with guns, whether they use them or not, women are intimidated. The threat is in the air."

In South Africa, according to statistics from a non-governmental advocacy group, Gun Free South Africa, 12 per cent of gun death victims in 1998 were female and about 7 per cent were under the age of 17. While the limited data available shows that the overwhelming majority of female victims were murdered by domestic partners or ex-partners, evidence that small arms are a major factor in domestic violence in Africa is more elusive. Researchers in Tanzania reported that guns were involved in 6 per cent of domestic violence cases, while a study in Zambia found that firearms were used in the murder of just three victims of domestic violence in 1995. The actual incidence, however, is almost certainly higher, as violent crimes against women are less likely to be reported, and recording the type of weapon used is rarely a priority.

While gun manufacturers argue that small arms are ideal self-defence weapons for women — equalizers in a fight with larger and more powerful men — males continue to exercise a near-monopoly on the ownership and control of weapons. Far from liberating women from the fear of violence, the ready availability of guns makes matters worse. "Women feel threatened by it," Ms. Van de Wiel said, "men feel empowered by it."

"You can run away from physical abuse," one South African woman told a journalist in 1998. "But you can't run away from bullets."

Challenging the 'culture of violence'

Part of the challenge of reducing both the availability and the use of small arms in South Africa, writes sociologist Dr. Jacklyn Cock, is that apartheid and the struggle against it has created a "culture of violence" that legitimizes the use of guns to resolve disputes, further polarizes social relations among races, classes and sexes, and creates a demand for arms that is supplied both legally and illicitly. Such a culture, argues WHO, "may dictate whether or not the weapons are actually used. In other words, in some societies it may be more socially acceptable to use firearms than in others.... This factor may explain why in some societies guns are available but are used less than in others."

The cultural significance of the AK-47 to the formerly colonized peoples of Southern Africa is a case in point. After decades of use by anti-colonial and anti-apartheid movements, the powerful weapon has come to be associated with liberation. A silhouette of the gun figures prominently on the Mozambican flag. Freedom songs from the struggles against minority rule in Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Angola often extolled its virtues, and those of the fighters carrying it.

In some African countries today, however, the weapon and its US and European equivalent equips brutal insurgencies, criminal gangs and paramilitary militias — paralyzing development efforts

Preparing collected weapons for a bonfire in Mali.

and dangerously exaggerating the association between arms and masculinity that is common to many cultures around the world. Replacing the romantic image of guns with an appreciation of their destructive impact, advocates argue, will require a long-term effort to reduce the supply, improve police protection and increase educational and economic opportunities for young men to break their identification with guns and violence.

The governments of some of the African countries most affected by gun violence, including Mali and South Africa, are moving aggressively to challenge the culture of violence with the strong support of their civil societies and the UN. In 1995 the South African and Mozambican governments began joint operations to curtail the flow of apartheid-era weapons entering South Africa illegally from former war zones in Mozambique. By the end of 1998, a series of missions, dubbed "Operations Rachel," had located and destroyed over 400 tonnes of light weapons and over 40 mn rounds of ammunition in one of the most effective arms decommissioning exercises in the world.

Several months later the South African government announced that it would destroy domestic stocks of surplus and confiscated weapons instead of selling them. The new programme, Operation Mouflon, formally began on 6 July 2000 with the destruction of some 63,000 assault rifles, pistols and machine guns, among nearly 263,000 small arms scheduled for destruction.

Bonfires in Mali

In West Africa, the government of Malian President Alpha Oumar Konaré and the UN Development Programme collected and publicly destroyed over 3,000 weapons in a bonfire on 27 March 1996. That action was followed by the adoption, on 31 October 1998, of a three-year moratorium on the import of light weapons into the region by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The organization also established an arms register and database. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) followed suit in 1999, condemning the illicit proliferation and trafficking in small arms and calling for coordinated African action against the trade.

Although the ECOWAS moratorium was extended for an additional three years in July 2001, a lack of resources for enforcement of both the West African and OAU initiatives has limited their effectiveness. The South African government and its non-governmental allies have focused on community-based efforts to reduce the allure of small arms. One of the most successful programmes has been the Soweto-based Youth Against Crime, formed by students to educate their peers about the dangers of small arms violence. Acting in cooperation with the police and Gun Free South Africa, 21 Soweto schools have declared their premises gun free. Efforts are now underway to launch the campaign nationally through the umbrella South African Youth Council.

ISS researchers have also surveyed community attitudes towards the ownership and use of firearms in order to design more effective education and disarmament programmes. They found that the great majority of people viewed small arms as an important contributor to crime and violence.

But they also discovered, among nearly 60 per cent of respondents, a willingness to carry one for self-defence. This reflects a residual distrust of the police among African, Asian and mixed race ("coloured") South Africans from the days when the police were seen as the enforcers of apartheid, analysts say. But it also reflects a popular perception, sometimes apparently exaggerated, that there has been an uncontrolled surge of criminal and vigilante violence since the end of white rule in 1994. There is strong public support both for tougher gun control laws and more and better-trained police to enforce them.

Alleviating poverty, inequality

In much the same way that the disarmament, demobilization and re-integration of former soldiers is now considered essential to the success of peace-building efforts in conflict situations, the Small Arms Survey notes, "interventions to curb the demand for small arms should focus on the alleviation of poverty and structural inequality, thereby helping to reduce some of the factors prompting people to keep or acquire weapons" in post-conflict societies. In the view of virtually all the experts, neither poverty, injustice nor the availability of cheap powerful small arms is sufficient to explain gun violence. It is at the intersection of all three, they say, that guns from past wars find new owners and new victims for Africa's open graves. ■

Can the financing gap be closed?

UN panel suggests new international taxes to help fund development

By ***Jullyette Ukabiala***

As aid from rich countries slides further, a UN independent panel on development financing recently proposed new ways of raising more funds to rescue millions of people from poverty — most of them in sub-Saharan Africa. In 1999, donor countries gave just $12 bn to the region as official development assistance (ODA), $6 bn less than they gave in 1995. Such aid, even at its peak, fell far short of the continent's needs.

The panel, chaired by former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo, was set up by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to identify innovative methods for raising the estimated $50 bn needed yearly to implement the UN's commitments to poverty reduction and sustainable growth in developing countries. Its recommendations will be considered by the UN conference on financing for development, to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002.

Among the proposals are taxes on the consumption of fossil fuels and on international currency transactions. The panel urges new ways to boost aid and investment flows to poor countries, and to assist countries raise funds from within their own economies through better political and economic management, including by improving their ability to collect domestic taxes. Such efforts would be supported by the establishment of an international tax organization and the holding of a summit that would address problems arising from globalization, the panel stated.

Members agreed that reversing the widening and "shameful" gap between rich and poor countries "is the pre-eminent moral and humanitarian challenge of our age." And sub-Saharan Africa, they noted, should be a priority. "Nowhere is a global commitment to poverty reduction needed more than in this region. Sub-Saharan Africa has the largest proportion of people living on less than one dollar a day, and indeed, its people are almost as poor as they were 20 years ago."

A currency tax

Combating poverty, the panel argued, requires the provision of vital services which strengthen social and political stability, such as peacekeeping, healthcare facilities and programmes for environmental protection — described collectively as "global public goods." To secure the enormous amount of money needed yearly for that, it said a global system of taxation is necessary, either through a currency transaction tax or a tax on the consumption of fossil fuels.

A currency transaction tax, also known as a "Tobin tax" — named after Yale University economist James Tobin, who first proposed it — would have individual countries collect a "small tax" of between 0.1 and 0.5 per cent on all foreign exchange transactions in their national currencies anywhere in the world. With the total value of such transactions currently put at $1,600 bn a day, up to $400 bn yearly would be raised at a minimum tax rate of 0.1 per cent. Each country would keep part of the revenue collected and release the remainder to international agencies funding global public goods.

The panel members agreed that reversing the widening and "shameful" gap between rich and poor countries "is the pre-eminent moral and humanitarian challenge of our age," with sub-Saharan Africa as a priority.

The panel noted that such a tax could have a side benefit of helping to curb potentially damaging speculative buying and selling of currencies — aimed at making profit later when prices change. Such "gambling" was in part blamed for the devastating capital outflows that plunged Southeast Asian countries into economic crisis in 1997-98.

The Tobin tax has been criticized on the grounds that it could be evaded, might not actually yield the expected benefits and could unwittingly hurt global economic growth by discouraging financial transactions of all kinds. However, several major industrial nations have voiced support for the tax, which is also backed by a growing coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The panel decided that "further rigorous technical study is needed" before any conclusions could be reached on its feasibility. Ms. Robin Round, policy analyst for the Halifax Initiative — one of the NGOs promoting the tax — told *Africa Recovery* that the call for further study "gives us an important opening to educate more people about the promises of a Tobin tax and to keep pushing for the consensus necessary to adopt it."

Taxing fuel consumption

The Zedillo panel also proposed a tax on the consumption of fossil fuels. Support for such a "carbon tax" has been growing since the 1992 UN Earth Summit focused international attention on the damage to the environment caused by excessive use of fossil fuels worldwide. The release of greenhouse gases, mainly carbon dioxide from fossil fuels, contributes to global warming and climate change.

The main energy sources that would be affected by a carbon tax include coal, petroleum, kerosene and natural gas. The tax would be reflected in an increase in their price, at a level based on the capacity of each type of fuel to emit carbon dioxide. The higher the carbon content, the higher the minimum tax rate. The tax would likely be collected by fuel vendors. Implementation would not be difficult since many countries already impose taxes on fossil fuels. An additional carbon tax, the panel hoped, should encourage consumers to shift to lower or non carbon-emitting sources of energy, such as hydro-power, solar energy and wind power.

The panel gave no estimates of how much a carbon tax could generate. Industrial countries would agree to release their carbon tax revenue to international organizations funding global public goods. Developing countries would invest their proceeds in their own economies, enabling them to increase public spending.

African states, like most other countries, are heavily dependent on fossil fuels for transport and industrial activities in both urban and rural areas. A carbon tax, which would make fuel more expensive for many families, would therefore also reduce the amount of money available for food and other basic necessities. Public demonstrations in countries like Nigeria and Zimbabwe following fuel price increases also indicate that a carbon tax could aggravate social discontent and political instability.

Would such a tax be good or bad for poor African countries? Good, says Ms. Emira Woods, programme manager for development policy issues at InterAction, a US-based coalition of over 165 NGOs, many of which are involved in development and humanitarian activities in Africa. Besides helping to clean up the environment, it would provide them with

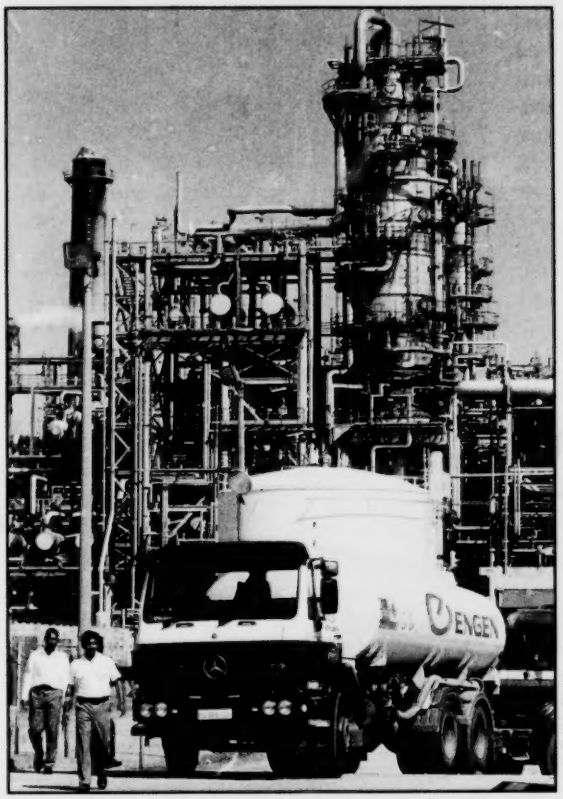
more development funding, she notes. Similarly, the deputy director of the regional bureau for Africa of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), Mr. Jacques Loup, told *Africa Recovery* that a carbon tax in rich countries would help "boost the international resource base for aid to Africa." However, Mr. Geoffrey Mwau, an economic and social policy adviser at the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), cautions that the benefits would be lost if the tax collected from rich countries is treated as a "substitute" for ODA.

An international tax organization

With increasing cross-border movement of goods, services and capital in the world today, states are less able to collect taxes from multinational corporations, the panel observed, bringing substantial losses in potential revenue. Pointing out that taxes have become a potential source of conflicts among states, it noted that "the taxes that one country can impose are often constrained by the tax rates of others." The lack of precise and established regulations for taxing the income of multinational corporations makes it difficult to determine which country is entitled to which tax. All that exists are "complex and in some respects arbitrary conventions," the panel said.

Several international and governmental organizations already deal with international tax issues, including a UN group of experts on international cooperation in tax matters. The panel said a new international tax organization should be created to assume all functions performed by existing institutions. It would serve as a global intergovernmental forum for international cooperation on all tax issues. It would also help resolve conflicts between countries and help them to increase tax revenue by fostering information exchanges and measures that could reduce tax evasion on investment and personal income earned at home and abroad. Funds raised could be used to increase spending on public services.

The capacity of many African states to generate income on their own is often hindered by inefficient tax collection. Mr. Loup of UNDP believes the proposed international tax organization could help African governments reform their tax policies, but it should not interfere with their authority to design their own tax systems. The real problem with the tax policies of African states has more to do with corruption, Mr. Mwau of ECA believes. Most Africans are poor and the small number of the rich from whom substantial taxes could be collected "are able to avoid taxes through corruption." For as long as that remains the case, he argues, tax reforms alone would not help Africa.



Oil refinery in South Africa: a modest tax on fossil fuel consumption could raise new funds for development, while also encouraging a shift to cleaner energy sources.

Globalizing decision-making

Existing international bodies, "largely designed for the world of fifty years ago," are no longer equipped to address problems arising from the growing interdependence of nations, the panel stated. There are no satisfactory means of dealing with global economic "shocks" and no effective way to ensure that all voices are heard. "Global economic decision-making has become increasingly concentrated in a few countries."

The panel called for the creation of a global council to lead the international community "at the highest level" in managing today's global issues. The council would be more broadly based than the Group of Seven industrialized countries or international financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Its decisions would not be legally binding, but it should have the political clout to promote development, encourage major international economic organizations to improve their policies and build consensus for resolving global economic and social problems. The panel recommended that the UN convene after next year's Mexico conference, a "globalization summit" of heads of state to decide on the shape and status of such a global council.

African leaders and advocacy groups have been complaining about the continent's increasing marginalization and impoverishment as a result of globalization and are not sure how the proposed global council and summit could benefit them. They "would be worthwhile," Mr. Loup said, so long as they devote adequate attention to issues that seriously affect Africa — crippling debt, aid flows, information and communication technology, market access and the environment. Mr. Lamin Manneh, UNDP's strategic and regional programme adviser for Africa, said more needs to be known about how a global council would help resolve "the problems we face today." A special forum or channel, he argued, should be created to enable African countries to express their concerns forcefully within the new institutions. The "big problem" is that the council would not have binding legal authority, says Ms. Woods, who nevertheless remains optimistic about the potential benefits of a global council to African states.

The ECA's Mr. Mwau notes that "attempts to deal with global issues through the existing mechanisms have failed not just because the institutional arrangements for dealing with them are inadequate, but more fundamentally because there is no political will." The creation of a new global council by itself would not help unless the international community commits to enforcing the council's decisions. African states, he argues, would benefit only if they are not excluded from making those decisions. ■

AFRICA IN BRIEF

AIDS drug access and funding top Africa's concerns

Access to medications and increased funding for HIV/AIDS education and prevention dominated the 9-13 December International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Africa, held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. It is vital to "ensure that people living with HIV/AIDS in the South can have ... access to medication, whether the drugs are copies or originals," Burkina's President Blaise Compaoré told the delegates.

Other speakers called for dramatic increases in overall funding for AIDS programmes in Africa. "Scaling down the disease can only take place by scaling up the resources," declared Mr. Stephen Lewis, the UN Secretary-General's special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa. According to the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), $5 bn is needed every year to control the pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa, but so far countries have pledged only one-tenth of that amount. Dr. Ibrahim N'doye of Senegal, president of the African Union Against Sexually Transmitted Diseases, said that the world's response to the AIDS crisis in Africa should be as great as its reaction to the 11 September terrorist attacks in New York.

According to UNAIDS, some 2.3 million people died of AIDS in Africa alone last year, and approximately 28 million Africans are HIV-positive. The scale of this crisis, said UNAIDS Executive Director Peter Piot, demands urgency. "Turning back the epidemic requires nothing more and nothing less than keeping the commitments that governments have made in the past year.... It is time now to turn those commitments into action." ■

'Open society' initiative launched in West Africa

A new foundation to promote civil society and democracy, the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), was launched on 11 December in Abuja, Nigeria. With funding from Mr. George Soros, a billionaire international financier, it will provide grants to organizations seeking to strengthen the region's independent media, court systems and other non-governmental initiatives that help support democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Democracy, stressed Mr. Soros at the launch, is "not just free elections, but also the institutions without which democracies cannot function."

AllAfrica.com

OSIWA board members (from left): Chairperson Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Nii Akuetteh and Zainab Bangura, with President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, who had previously urged Mr. Soros to extend his philanthropic activities to West Africa, welcomed the establishment of OSIWA. He hoped that the foundation, in addition to its other concerns, would also help ensure "transparency as an antidote to rampant corruption."

The organization's board is composed of prominent individuals from the region, and is chaired by Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, former head of the UN Development Programme's Regional Bureau for Africa. It will cover 18 countries, including all the members of the Economic Community of West African States, plus Chad and Cameroon. In addition to the Abuja office, OSIWA will open one in Dakar, Senegal. Six years ago, Mr. Soros launched a similar group, the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), with an office in South Africa.

Rights vital to Africa's progress, says UN commissioner

Africa can much better tackle poverty and advance its development by pursuing a strong "human rights approach," says UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson. Marking International Human Rights Day on 10 December 2001 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia — the first time in 52 years the UN officially commemorated the day in Africa — she said that such an approach would guarantee people's participation, non-discrimination and a broad range of civil, political, cultural, economic and social rights. Such rights are indivisible from the right to development, she said.

The continent's struggles for self determination and racial equality, particularly the campaign against apartheid, helped shape many international human rights instruments, Ms. Robinson noted. "This is a debt the world owes to Africa, but which is not often recognized," she added. Africa's recent initiatives for political and economic recovery, under the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development, offer opportunities for the international community "to begin to redeem that debt.... We must create true partnerships with African peoples and institutions ... if real change is to take place in the material conditions of the people and enduring democratic foundations are to be strengthened or built."

Extreme poverty, Ms. Robinson observed, is the worst human rights problem in the world today, and Africa is the worst hit. "Let us all, my office, other UN agencies, the OAU [Organization of African Unity], governments and organs of civil society commit ourselves to ... make human and peoples' rights a reality in the lives of African peoples." ■

Transition government seated in Burundi amid heavy fighting

The installation of a power-sharing transition government in Burundi on 1 November was welcomed by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan as "a significant step forward" in efforts to end the country's bloody civil war. But heavy fighting continued near the Burundian capital, Bujumbura, between the minority Tutsi-dominated army and rebels drawn from the Hutu majority. The bloodshed was a stark reminder that Burundi's two principal rebel movements remain outside the peace agreement, prompting the UN Security Council to declare the signing of a cease-fire the "number one priority" for the new government. Since the war began in 1993, an estimated 200,000 people have died, and 800,000 others have been driven from their homes.

Under the terms of the agreement, reached in negotiations begun by the late Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere and concluded by former South African President Nelson Mandela, the transitional government will serve for three years, with the current military head of state, Maj. Pierre Buyoya, a Tutsi, serving as president for the first 18 months. His Hutu vice-president, Mr. Domitien Ndayizeye, will occupy the

presidency for the second half of the transition. The interim government is charged with integrating the army and civil service and preparing for general elections.

Security for members of the new government will initially be provided by a battalion of South African soldiers, part of a pan-African peacekeeping force that is to eventually include Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal. In the absence of a cease-fire, however, the Security Council has not authorized a UN military presence. On 7 December donors concluded a meeting in Paris with pledges of $830 mn in reconstruction and development aid for the war-ravaged country. ■

'E-commerce' a tool for development

Poor countries can exploit rapidly expanding opportunities for profitable commercial ventures on the Internet, argue researchers of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). "E-commerce," as it is popularly called, can be "an important tool for development," says the agency's *E-Commerce and Development Report 2001*, released in November 2001. Advanced information and communications technology can enable businesses to cut costs, increase efficiency and reduce constraints of time and distance, enhancing their productivity. Noting that e-commerce in industrialized countries has helped stimulate growth, the report highlights the potential for developing countries to also benefit.

Among the African e-commerce ventures cited is EthioGift, based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It earned $50,000 in 2000 selling a variety of products, including "very big sheep" for family feasts, many of them bought by Ethiopians who live in developed countries but support their families back home. The key to success, observes UNCTAD, is to sell products to a diaspora community or "small niche market" abroad. Other examples include a Ugandan company selling traditional African fabrics to African-Americans and a Tanzanian venture that markets African art to the same clientele. E-commerce ventures can also be used to secure expert advice on health care from doctors in Northern countries, as well as to promote tourism via the Internet ("e-tourism"), notes the report.

There are some constraints hampering e-commerce, however, including inadequate access to computers, skilled personnel and Internet facilities, and a limited ability to handle credit card payments, the report states. For developing countries to realize the full potential of e-commerce to help narrow the North-South productivity gap, they must step up their technological development. Otherwise, it warns, e-commerce could further widen the gap.

Nigeria seeks to ease tensions in oil delta

On 10 December the Nigerian government and the UN Development Programme opened a three-day conference on the sustainable development of the oil-rich Niger Delta wetlands. Since 1970 over $320 bn worth of crude oil has been exported from the region, accounting for some 90 per cent of Nigeria's hard currency earnings and making Nigeria a major world oil-producing country. But the 7 million residents of the Delta are among Nigeria's poorest, and protests against the perceived injustice of extreme poverty in the midst of vast wealth have often disrupted oil production — threatening the country's economic lifeline and provoking violent clashes among local communities, and between activists and the authorities.

Michael Fleshman

Exposed oil pipes outside a home in Nigeria's Niger Delta region.

The meeting brought together community leaders with members of the government's newly established Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) for dialogue on a delta-wide programme to create jobs, build infrastructure and ease the frustrations fueling unrest. "Farmers and fishermen of this agro-rich region have largely been deprived of their means of livelihood through extensive pollution of their rivers and farmlands," Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo told delegates. "I pledge to seek immediate solutions to the many problems which have so long beset the region." The NDDC, made up of the governors of the oil-producing states, has announced it will spend $3 bn over the next 10 years on development projects in consultation with local elected officials and civil society groups.

The NDDC proposals fall short of community demands for greater resource control, however. On the final day of the meeting, members of the militant Bayelsa Youths Federation stormed the NDDC office in the Bayelsa state capital of Yenagoa to denounce the commission. Police broke up a similar protest a week earlier by the National Youth Council of the Ogoni People, whose activists forced the Shell oil company to withdraw from the Ogoni region of the delta in 1993.

Highlighting the continuing environmental problems that arouse so much local anger, the government's Department of Petroleum Resources reported that in the week between 26 November and 2 December alone, the delta experienced 18 separate oil spills involving the discharge of over 2,500 barrels of crude oil. ■

African bank to support universities

Africa's desperately underfunded universities will soon get another source of potential financing. The African Development Bank (ADB), a continent-wide bank headquartered in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, is finalizing a new fund of some $70 mn specifically to support higher education institutions. According to Senegal's Minister of National Education Moustapha Sourang, the Bank is motivated by recognition of the importance of advanced knowledge and skills for the continent's long-term development. Moreover, he said, the ADB believes African universities should also be funded by African regional institutions, and not just governments or external donors. ■

Liberating girls from 'trokosi'

Campaign against ritual servitude in Ghana

By **Nirit Ben-Ari**

Hundreds of families and guests came to Adidome, Ghana, on 10 November 2001 to celebrate with 128 women freed from years of forced labour in the service of local priests. The women were graduating from a vocational centre run by a local non-governmental organization, International Needs Ghana (ING), which helps women reclaim normal lives in their communities. "Changing centuries old customs and practices is not easy," said Fiaga Togbe Kwao, the chief of the Mepe Traditional Area in his address at the graduation ceremony. He urged the crowd to support efforts to raise the status of women throughout Ghanaian society.

AfricaPhotos.com - Robert Grossman

A young girl forced to serve as a "trokosi" for a village priest in Ghana.

The women at the vocational centre had all been taken to serve as *trokosi*, literally "wife of the gods" in the local Ewe language. According to the customary practice in Ghana's Volta region, which has lasted some 300 years, if someone commits a serious crime or social infraction, traditional leaders order that a young girl from that family be sent to the shrine as a form of atonement. She is expected to serve the priest for three to five years, after which the family might redeem her.

The practice, however, has commonly resulted in exploitation and sexual abuse of the young girls. Ms. Dora Galley, now 22 years old and one of the women who learned hairdressing skills at the vocational centre, spent seven years in a shrine. She says she was compelled by the priest to work on the shrine's farm from morning until evening without any payment or food.

"I had to cut down trees and uproot tree stumps to burn into charcoal to sell and make some money to take care of myself," she says. "I did not have the right to take crops from the farm unless the priest allowed me to. Occasionally my parents sent me some food, but that was kept in the priest's room and I had to request it any time I needed some. I was forced to have sex with the priest as one of the rituals in the shrine, but luckily I did not get pregnant."

Ms. Patience Akope, now 31, tells a similar story. She spent 21 years at a shrine and has one 15-year-old child. "The priest did not allow me to visit the clinic for prenatal care or go to the hospital," she explains. "Throughout the pregnancy, I had to fend for myself."

Trokosi is also practiced in Benin, Nigeria and Togo, but most information on it comes from Ghana. Since its inception, the ING has liberated and rehabilitated 2,800 trokosi women and children, although thousands more are thought to exist. All the graduates in Adidome spent between 6 months and 3 years in the ING's vocational centre. They were taught skills such as batik, tie dyeing, soap and pomade making, hairdressing and baking, which will be valuable as they try to build a new, independent life.

'Trokosi is a crime'

In June 2001, the ING received $50,000 from the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to improve its anti-trokosi programmes, including vocational centres, psychological counselling, schools for trokosi children, and campaigns to educate people on laws and activities aimed at changing trokosi practices.

Ms. Florence Butegwa, UNIFEM's regional programme coordinator in Lagos, Nigeria, notes that trokosi is just one kind of abuse against women, among many around the world. In other places, she told *Africa Recovery*, it might be widow burning, female genital mutilation or physical assault by family members. "Women's rights abuses are not unique to Africa," she says. Nevertheless, when viewed as "violations of the rights of women," practices such as trokosi are simply unacceptable.

Ms. Akope is adamant: "The practice of trokosi is a crime and it should be stopped completely. Human beings are not animals to be sacrificed. The government should move quickly to arrest and jail those who are still perpetuating this evil and dehumanizing practice of keeping and abusing young innocent girls in the shrine."

Laws are not enough

Members of the ING and other activists in Ghana have influenced the government to outlaw the trokosi practice. In 1998, the Ghanaian parliament passed a law banning all forms of ritualized forced labour. In early 2001, President John Agyekum Kufuor, commenting on the practice of trokosi, declared, "Girls should go to school, not to a shrine." He pledged to enforce the law. So far, however, no priest or family member has been jailed for continuing the practice.

Ending behaviour that is embedded in tradition is not simple. Cultural practices "die hard," Ms. Wisdom Mensah, the ING project coordinator, told *Africa Recovery*. In October 2001, she noted, the ING held a seminar for police officers in the Volta region. A majority of participants said they were not familiar with trokosi and were not aware of the law against it. The ING's focus, she explained, is to sensitize people about trokosi, aiming at its gradual elimination. Legislation alone cannot do that.

Ms. Butegwa is similarly critical of only "criminalizing the practice without understanding why the practice continues to exist." As a result, she says, trokosi may be perpetuated "in another form or underground."

Some local groups have accused the ING of trying to destroy traditional culture. "We are not against our culture," Ms. Mensah explains. "We are against servitude, slavery and child labour." In response to accusations that her group is attacking the constitutional right of freedom of religion, she answers: "Your freedom ends where someone else's freedom begins. If you have a religion, a belief system or a traditional practice that enslaves people, puts them in servitude and reduces their dignity, then you violate our national constitution."

Because of her work, Ms. Mensah has received death threats. But she is undeterred. "It's worth devoting one's life to the cause of women." ■

AFRICA AGENDA

FUTURE EVENTS

19-21 January 2002, Dhaka (Bangladesh) — International Conference on Renewable Energy for Rural Development. Contact Sadrul Islam, fax 880-2-861-3046, e-mail <sadrul@me.buet.edu>.

23-24 January 2002, Johannesburg, (South Africa) — Global Meeting on Health and Sustainable Development. Contact Y.E.R. Von Schirnding, WHO, tel (41-22) 791-3533, fax 791-4153, e-mail <vonschirndingy@who.ch>.

30-31 January 2002, Geneva (Switzerland) — International Aid & Trade Europe Exhibition and Conference. Participants will discuss the changing nature of aid delivery. Contact Caroline Maguire, e-mail <caroline.maguire@aidandtrade.com

31 January-4 February 2002, New York (US) — World Economic Forum. Contact Charles McLean, e-mail <public.affairs@weforum.org>.

31 January-5 February 2002, Porto Alegre (Brazil) — World Social Forum. Web site: <www.forumsocialmundial.org.br>

4-7 February 2002, San Jose (Costa Rica) — International Conference on Impacts of Agro Research and Development. Contact Timothy Reeves, CIMMYT, Mexico, tel 52-5804-2004, fax 52-5804-7558, e-mail <impacts@cgiar.org>.

13-15 February 2002, Cartagena, (Colombia) — Seventh Special Session of UNEP Governing Council/Third Global Ministerial Environment Forum. Contact Beverly Miller, UNEP, Nairobi, tel (254-2) 62-3929, e-mail <bmiller@unep.org>.

28 February-2 March 2002, Uttar, Pradesh (India) — International Conference on Tourism, Community and Conservation. Contact conference secretariat, e-mail <tvsingh@sancharnet.in>.

3-8 March 2002, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) — The third African Development Forum. Organized by the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the conference theme is "Defining Priorities for Regional Integration." Contact Peter Robleh, ECA, tel (251-1) 44 52 25, fax (251-1) 51 65 63, e-mail <probleh@uneca.org>

3-7 March 2002, Bangkok (Thailand) — International Conference on Environmental Threats to the Health of Children. Contact WHO, tel (41-22) 791-4475, e-mail <ceh-conference@who.int>

16-20 March 2002, Alexandria (Egypt) — Biotechnology and Sustainable Development. Contact Ismail Serageldin, tel (203) 487-6024/8, e-mail <egybio2001@hotmail.com>

11-13 April 2002, Athens, Ohio (US) — HIV/AIDS and the African Child: Health Challenges, Educational Possibilities. Fourth annual conference of the Institute for the African Child. Contact Abdul Lamin, e-mail <lamin@ohio.edu>.

2-11 September 2002, Johannesburg (South Africa) — World Summit on Sustainable Development. Tel (212) 963-3170, e-mail <dsd@un.org>, Web site <www.johannesburgsummit.org>

WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE

2-4 December 2001, Washington D.C. (US) — The Global Disaster Relief & Reconstruction Summit. First global forum to bring together all disaster relief and reconstruction sectors. E-mail <events@equityinternational.tv>

6 December 2001, Paris (France) — "Building Cooperation in Africa: Business Investment and Humanitarian Challenges" organized by the International Chamber of Commerce and the Business Humanitarian Forum. Tel (33-1) 49 53 28 28, e-mail <conf@iccwbo.org>.

7-9 December 2001, Loccum (Germany) — New Momentum in the Post-Lomé Era?, on Africa-German economic relations. Contact Lawford N. Imunde, tel 49-5766-81-124, e-mail <Lawford.imunde@evlka.de>

16-18 December 2001, Dakar (Senegal) — Regional Seminar on Migration in West Africa organized by the International Organization for Migration and the International Migration Policy Programme. Contact Jean Louis Domergue, IOM Dakar (221) 865 19 01, e-mail<mrfdajkar@iom.int>.

AFRICA BOOKS

Policies to Promote Competitiveness in Manufacturing in Sub-Saharan Africa (OECD Publications, Washington, DC, US; 2001; 142 pp; $27)

The Skull Beneath the Skin — Africa After the Cold War by Mark Huband (Westview Press, Boulder, CO, US; 2001; 376 pp; hb $30)

The Impact of EMU on Europe and the Developing Countries, ed. Charles Wyplosz, (Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, Switzerland; 2001; 418 pp; hb £45.00)

Comparing Regionalisms: Implications for Global Development by Björn Hettne, András Inotai, Osvaldo Sunkel, (Palgrave Publishers, Houndmills, UK; 2001; 328 pp; hb £50.00)

Access to Land, Rural Poverty, and Public Action by Alain de Janvry, Gustavo Gordillo, Elisabeth Sadoulet and Jean-Philippe Platteau, (University of Namur, Belgium; 2001; 630 pp; hb. £55)

Africa — A Continent Self-Destructs by Peter Schwab (Palgrave Publishers, St. Martin's Press, New York, US; 2001; 224 pp; hb $26.95)

Working on the Margins: Plantation Workers in Zimbabwe by Blair Rutherford (Zed Books, London, UK, 2001; 304 pp; hb. $69.95)

The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists' Adventures and Misadventures in the Tropics by William Easterly (MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, US; 2001; 400 pp; $29.95)

The Poverty of "Development Economics" by Deepak Lal (MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, US; 2001; 176 pp; pb $22.95)

Sierra Leone: Diamonds and the Struggle for Democracy by John L. Hirsch (Lynne Rienner, Boulder, CO, US; 2001; 176 pp; $14.95)

Peacemaking in Rwanda: The Dynamics of Failure by Bruce D. Jones (Lynne Rienner, Boulder, CO, US; 2001; 209 pp; hb $49.95)

Globalization, Human Security and the African Experience, ed. Caroline Thomas and Peter Wilkin (Lynne Rienner, Boulder, CO, US; 1999; 216 pp; $25)

Globalization, Growth, and Poverty: Building an Inclusive World Economy by David Dollar and Paul Collier (World Bank, Washington DC, US; 2001; 188 pp; $25)

Promises Not Kept: The Betrayal of Social Change in the Third World by John Isbister (Kumarian Press, Bloomfield, CT, US; 2001; 272 pp; pb $23.95)

Sustainable Livelihoods — Building on the Wealth of the Poor by Kristin Helmore and Haresh Singh (Kumarian Press, Bloomfield, CT, US; 2001; 144 pp; pb $19.95)

IMF-World Bank and Labour's Burdens in Africa: Ghana's Experience by Kwamina Panford (Greenwood Publishing, Westport, CT, US; 2001; 200 pp; hb $58)

Street Children in Kenya: Voices of Children in Search of a Childhood by Philip Kilbride, Collette Suda and Enos Njeru (Greenwood Publishing, Westport, CT, US; 2001; 184 pp; pb $19.95)

Culture, Education, and Development in South Africa: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives by Ali A. Abdi (Greenwood Publishing, Westport, CT, US; 2001; 232 pp; hb $64.95)

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AFRICA WATCH

SIERRA LEONE

Paris Club cancels $72 mn in debt

Amid other international efforts to help Sierra Leone recover from a decade-long civil war, the Paris Club of official bilateral creditor nations agreed in October to cancel about $72 mn of the West African country's foreign debt, estimated in 1999 at around $888 mn. Sierra Leone is one of the 41 countries potentially eligible for debt relief under the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, but it is not yet up for formal consideration.

The Paris Club deal will therefore bring some needed financial relief over the next few years. According to Paris Club analysts, the agreement will reduce from $180 mn to $45 mn the amount of debt servicing Sierra Leone will need to pay its public creditors between 1 October 2001 and 30 September 2004. Other portions of the debt were rescheduled over repayment periods of up to 40 years. ■

POLIO

Vaccination campaign marks progress toward eradication

Thanks to an aggressive, continent-wide campaign to eradicate polio, only 147 cases were recorded in Africa in 2000, Mr. Olusegun Babaniyi of the Africa regional office of the World Health Organization (WHO) told a meeting of polio specialists in Ethiopia in early December. This compares with 2,198 cases in 1995, when the first national immunization days were conducted in Africa. During 2001, some 86 million children were immunized against the disease in West and Central Africa, and only 46 cases had been recorded in the continent by November.

Those figures may be incomplete, however. Just a few days after the conference, five new suspected cases were identified in Ethiopia. Moreover, the number of recorded cases probably understates the incidence of the disease, given the limited surveillance capacity of most African health systems. Since polio can easily spread from one country to another, total eradication is essential, to prevent small pockets from again developing into a major scourge that paralyzes thousands of children each year.

Dr. Bruce Aylward, the global coordinator for the WHO's polio eradication initiative, told the meeting that the campaign is experiencing some difficulties due to insufficient political commitment by governments and inadequate financing. Of the $1 bn needed for the vaccination efforts in 2002, Mr. Aylward said, donors have so far pledged only some $600 mn. ■

LUMUMBA

Belgian commission admits 'moral responsibility'

More than four decades after the January 1961 assassination of Congo's first president, Mr. Patrice Lumumba, a Belgian parliamentary commission of inquiry has concluded that former Belgian ministers bear a "moral responsibility" for the killing. "We need to show Africans that we are prepared to look clearly at what we did in their countries," explained Mr. Geert Versnick, the commission chairman. "We lecture them about human rights and good government and the rule of law. And they ask us: 'What did you do here?'"

The mystery of Mr. Lumumba's assassination has long been a source of controversy within Africa. The precise identity of the assassins has never been established, although it is generally known that he was killed by secessionist leaders in the then breakaway province of Katanga (now Shaba). Coming at a time of civil war in which various foreign military forces were involved and the UN was carrying out a difficult peacekeeping mission, many Africans believe there also was some role by Western intelligence agencies.

The commission's final report concluded that there is no documentary or eyewitness evidence that the Belgian government or any of its members "gave the orders to physically eliminate Lumumba." However, it did find that King Baudouin knew of plans by Mr. Lumumba's opponents to assassinate him and that some Belgian officers had witnessed the killing. ■

Somalia on the precipice

Somalia is a "forgotten emergency," says UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Randolph Kent. In 2001, donors contributed barely a fifth of needed emergency assistance. UN agencies acknowledge that although the humanitarian situation will worsen in 2002, their overall request for relief aid has been scaled back from $130 mn to $83.7 mn, "in recognition that the political environment is not yet conducive for a significant injection of transitional and recovery funding," notes a press release from Mr. Kent's office.

UNHCR / E. Dagnino

Somalia's current tragedy has in fact been worsened by the political fallout of the Afghanistan crisis. The US government has maintained that companies involved in transferring remittances to Somalia from Somalis living abroad may have links to "terror networks," and has sought to shut them down. Such remittances may have brought in between $500 mn and $700 mn a year, a sum which has now been cut in half.

Mr. Kent, at a briefing at UN headquarters in New York, noted that this hardship has come on top of several others: a serious drought that has left nearly 800,000 Somalis in desperate need of food relief, the onset of hyper-inflation over the past year, and a ban on livestock exports to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states because of fear of infection from Rift Valley Fever, cutting off another $300-400 mn in export earnings.

Previously, Somalia had been slowly recovering from a decade of civil war, with the establishment of a fragile transitional government in Mogadishu and clear signs of economic recovery, financed largely by remittances and investments by Somalis in the diaspora. Now, however, because of its combined difficulties, "Somalia is on the precipice of potential and total economic collapse," Mr. Kent emphasized. Even though UN officials in Somalia have not so far detected any significant signs of "radicalism," such a collapse could provide conditions in which it may emerge.

In addition to urging donors to respond favourably to the UN's emergency aid appeal, Mr. Kent recommended relatively simple and inexpensive steps to strengthen Somali banking institutions, in order to improve transparency and the ability to monitor cash transfers. The resumption of remittances could go a long way toward helping many Somalis survive.